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A
LETTER

To the Reverend

Mr. JOHN GURSE,

Occasioned by his

TWO SERMONS

Preached at *St. Hellens,*

On ACTS ix. 20.

IN WHICH

The SCRIPTURE-NOTION of *Preaching*
CHRIST is stated and defended:

AND

Mr. Gurse's Charges against his BRETHREN
are considered, and proved groundless.

By **SAMUEL CHANDLER.**

*Quorundam (Theologorum) mores faciunt, ut hoc sanctis-
simum studium apud quosdam male audiat, cum apicem ac
fastigium hujus professionis assecuti, nonnullam ferociorem
sunt idiotis, a rusticiores, magis irrisibiles, lingua viru-
lentiores, ac prope, ad omnem vite consuetudinem incom-
modiores, n. modo quam sint imperiti, sed quam ipsi so-
leant esse. Quasi studii genus hoc sinceritatem & commu-
nem sensum adimat homini. Erasm. tom. 5. p. 65. &
tom. 9. p. 431.*

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MDCCXXX.

LETTER
TO THE
HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY
OF THE
TREASURY

London



Presented to the
British Museum

By the
Honorable

Secretary of the Treasury

For the purpose of
acquiring the
manuscript
of the
History of the
British Empire
from the year
1753 to the
present time
and for the
purpose of
acquiring the
manuscript
of the
History of the
British Empire
from the year
1753 to the
present time

Witness my hand
this 1st day of
January 1753

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LETTER

T O

The Rev. Mr. JOHN GUYSE.

REVEREND SIR,

WHEN the twelve Sermons preached at Mr. Coward's Lecture came out, bearing the name of six reverend and worthy Divines, my natural curiosity, and hopes of finding an agreeable entertainment in them, immediately led me to peruse them. The reverend Mr. Hubbard tells us, that these discourses were *directly intended to recommend our Lord Jesus Christ, which lying near the heart of the worthy founder, was principally in his view from the first settlement of the lecture.* This design is undoubtedly good, and how well the gentlemen concern'd in executing it have performed, I leave the world to judge. I had originally no intention nor inclination to make any remarks on any of this sextuple alliance. However I might differ as to some incidental points with them, yet I should have been well pleased had they all freely expressed their Sentiments about the several points which were given them to treat of, provided they had done it

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with a christian spirit, and preached Christ's *loveliness and glory* according to their own sentiments, without any injurious and unchristian reflections upon their brethren.

I could have particularly wish'd that Mr. *Guyse* had acted this christian part: You would have saved yourself and me the trouble of these reflections. But as I think I have an equal concern with you for the interest of christianity, and the preaching Christ, and as I believe *Christ's loveliness and glory* is as frequently and pertinently insisted on in other protestant dissenting congregations, as in Mr. *Guyse's*, or those of his party, or even at good Mr. *Coward's* Lecture; and as I have a tender regard for the reputation and character of all good men and faithful ministers; I could not suffer myself to pass by your hard and rash censures of your brethren, openly pronounced in the solemn assembly, and now propagated for the publick edification, without some friendly animadversions upon them.

The subject allotted to you for the ground of your discourses is truly excellent, and methinks of such a nature, as should have kept you from any thing that borders upon wrath, variance, emulation, censoriousness, and hasty judging the servants and ministers of Christ. And for any one, whose very text and subject of discourse was *preaching Christ*, to introduce his sermon with a *railing accusation* against others, is, to use your own words, *really preposterous and amazing*.

I shall not make any remarks on your account of the titles or characters of Christ, nor on that acute criticism which you have laid for the foundation of your first sermon, as to the sense of the
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the words *Christ*, and *the Son of God*, which you accurately distinguish into the *Divine* and *Office-titles*; which conceit I leave you in full possession of. I shall only take the liberty to enquire into the account you have given us, What it is to preach *Christ*, and then into the justness of your censures upon those, who may happen to differ from you about *Office-titles* and the like, or who may preach *Christ* in a somewhat different manner from what you do your self.

You tell us, that preaching *Christ* may be con- Pag. 227.
sider'd with greater latitude or restriction. That in the latitude of the expression it takes in the whole compass of christian religion, considered in its reference to *Christ*. That it extends to all its noble improvements of natural light and principles, and to all its glorious peculiarities of the supernatural and incomprehensible kind. That in this sense there is no doctrine, institution, precept or promise, no grace, privilege or duty towards God or man; no instance of faith, love, repentance, worship or obedience, suited to the gospel state, &c. that don't belong to preaching *Christ*. This, I think, is a very good and just notion of preaching *Christ*, or the religion of *Christ*; and in this extensive view surely every minister of *Christ* ought to preach him; and not so to confine himself to some peculiar and favourite doctrines or topicks, as to exclude other things equally important, and equally contained in the christian revelation. You add, that to bring all these with any propriety under this denomination, i. e. to make the preaching of the noble improvements of natural light and principles by *Christ*, and the glorious peculiarities of the supernatural and incomprehensible kind in the gospel; to

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make the preaching this, together with the doctrines, promises, graces, privileges, and duties of the gospel preaching Christ, *they must be considered in their reference to Christ, that he may be interwoven with them, and appear to be concerned in them.* That *they must not be preached with the air of an heathen moralist, or platonick philosopher, but with the spirit of a minister of Christ.*

I do not very well understand the reason or pertinence of this caution. For I cannot conceive how any man can preach upon *the gospel peculiarities of the supernatural and incomprehensible kind, or of the doctrines, promises, graces, and privileges of the gospel, with the air of an heathen moralist and platonick philosopher.* I suppose the doctrines of the trinity, incarnation, satisfaction, &c. are some of the doctrines you will chuse to comprehend under the *gospel peculiarities of the supernatural and incomprehensible kind.* Can any man preach of these things like an heathen moralist, or platonick philosopher? Where hath *Plato* or the heathen moralists given us a specimen of their preaching on these subjects? And where are the ministers that preach on them after the heathen and platonick manner? If there be any such, they must be of the supernatural and incomprehensible kind. Was I to preach on these subjects, as I often have done, I should be so far from consulting *Plato*, or the heathen moralists, as to think it my duty to confine myself wholly to the gospel-account, and not trouble my hearers with the curious distinctions and nice speculations of heathen or christian philosophers, which gender to strife, rather than edification and love. And tho' perhaps I might hereby forfeit the character of a profound and incomprehensible preacher, I might possibly gain

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gain one, which is much better, that of being a plain and intelligible one. 'Tis the same with respect to the promises, graces, and privileges of the Gospel. Are any of these to be found in *Plato* and the Philosophers? Have they ever made us the promises of God's holy Spirit, of justification, and a future resurrection? Have they ever treated of adoption, communion with God and Christ, and our title and heirship to the kingdom of heaven? Are they not wholly contained in the gospel of Christ? If they are, 'tis impossible for any one to preach of them like an heathen, or without any reference to Christ. Nor can I conceive any other end you could have in this caution, but to insinuate that there are some ministers who never preach on these things at all; or that if they do, 'tis in a very heathen and unchristian manner. If this was your design, as by other expressions it appears to be, I pray God give you a better spirit, and teach you not only how to preach Christ, but how to imitate and resemble him.

As to all moral duties, I entirely agree with you, that when they are preached, they ought to be enforced by motives and obligations taken from Christ, *i. e.* such motives and obligations as Christ and his Apostles have set before us; *viz.* from the authority and example of Christ, and the absolute necessity of them to salvation, by the express constitution of the gospel of Christ, which I suppose is what you mean by the cautious expression, of their being *advantageous* Pag. 228.
to our salvation; and from the promise of the Holy Spirit, and God's readiness to grant it to all that sincerely ask it. 'Twas in this manner the Apostles preached them, laying them down as indispensable conditions of men's acceptance
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and eternal happiness, and placing their future acquittal or condemnation at the tribunal of our Lord, upon their deeds as they were good or evil. They did not weaken men's obligations to them, by allowing them to continue in sin, because grace hath abounded, by giving them any hopes of pardon and acceptance, without repentance and new obedience, by speaking slightly of good works and the fruits of righteousness. No, thus to preach is not to preach Christ, but to corrupt and subvert his gospel; and out of a zeal for the glory of free grace, and to exalt the honour of his person and offices, to expose both of them to the contempt of unbelievers. I will not even suspect that you meant these things, when you tell us, that they must be preached *with the spirit of a minister of Christ, referring them up to him, as shining in their brightest lustres, and triumphing in all their glories through him*; and I dare promise myself you will never charge those for whom you designed your censures, with preaching duty, repentance and obedience upon such false principles and motives. As to all the places you have cited, they contain such motives to virtue, as are derived from the authority, example, and death of Christ, which is what you call, *giving the evangelical turn to moral duties, evangelizing them, and interweaving Christ with them*: which I humbly conceive you don't mean of his person, or merely of his name, but of the great arguments and sanctions of his religion and gospel. And as you will find it difficult to press with any advantage moral duties upon other principles, or to interweave Christ with them in any other way, they who preach moral duties in this manner, equally preach Christ with yourself; and might, me-

methinks, have escaped without your censures and reproaches.

Having thus consider'd your general notion of preaching Christ, you come to what you call the *more restrictive way*, i. e. *the more direct and immediate way of preaching him*. And considering it in this light, you tell the world, it *re-* Pag. 132.
lates to the person and mediation of Christ, to the eternal counsels of God's will in him, and to the whole method of divine wisdom and grace in the salvation of sinners by him. I am a little apprehensive that your distinction of preaching Christ *with a latitude*, and in *the more restrictive way*, is a distinction without a difference. For to preach Christ in the *greater latitude*, as you tell us, *takes in the whole compass of christian religion, consider'd in its reference to Christ*. To preach him in your *restrictive way*, *relates to the whole method of divine wisdom and grace in the salvation of sinners by him*. Now I should think that the whole compass of christian religion in its reference to Christ, is individually the same thing, as the whole method of divine wisdom and grace in the salvation of sinners by Christ; because the Christian Religion is in reality nothing else but the method of divine wisdom and grace in the salvation of sinners by Christ: and how the same method of preaching Christ should be more general and more restrictive at the same time; and why you should imagine, that because you preach upon the whole method of divine wisdom and grace in the salvation of sinners by Christ, you preach Christ better than others who preach the whole christian religion consider'd in its reference to Christ, appears to me peculiar and incomprehensible. If preaching Christ in the *more restrictive way* relates to the
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eternal counsels of God's will in him, as you tell us it doth, then the preaching up the necessity of good works, or of all christian virtues, must be preaching Christ in the more restrictive way, as truly as preaching upon the person and mediation of Christ; because the Apostle tells us, *That we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them;* Eph. ii. 10. *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love;* Eph. i. 4. And of consequence, the general and direct way of preaching Christ, is entirely the same, and the one as extensive a province as the other.

If we farther examine your particular instances of preaching Christ in the restrictive and direct way, we shall find it just the same as preaching Christ with greater latitude. You tell us, *it includes all that hath been, or can be said of him, under the characters of the Son of God, and the Christ; i. e. the divine and Office-titles; his equality with the Father in his divine nature, and subordination to him in the human nature, and office-capacity; his peculiar and entire fitness for the redemption of the church; all his royalties and advocacy as a priest upon his throne; his dominion over all, and his peculiar headship to the church, and his coming to raise the dead, and judge the world at the last day. His offices, names, titles, and relations; the tenour, settlement, and confirmation of the covenant of grace in him; all the obligations he hath laid upon us, and all the high and sacred regards of duty, gratitude, and love that he deserves and demands from us, &c.* This, you say, is preaching Christ directly, and in the restrictive sense. I appeal to any man of
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Common understanding, whether these expressions do not take in every thing that your account of preaching Christ in the latitude-way doth? This latter extends to all the noble improvements of natural light and principles by the Christian Religion; and is not this the very same as preaching up the equality and subordination of the Son, the royalties of Christ, his dominion over all, his judging the world, and the high regards of duty, &c. that we owe him; which is with you the restrictive way of preaching Christ, and which, I think, are all noble improvements of natural light and principles? To preach Christ in the general way, *relates to every doctrine, institution, precept, and promise of Christ.* And can you preach of these things, without preaching of his *divine and office-titles, his peculiar fitness for the redemption of his Church, and the regards of duty, gratitude, and love that he deserves and demands from us.* So that these two ways do actually coincide, and have both exactly the same latitude, and are equally restrictive. Neither method contains any thing that the other wants, nor wants any thing that the other hath. And I am persuaded Mr. Guyse, upon a review of these things, will find it very difficult to make any difference between the general and restrictive way of preaching Christ, as he himself hath been pleased to explain them.

But a difference it seems there must be, and I do believe you intended one; for you have a design to answer by it, and some choice observations to make upon the restrictive way of preaching Christ. And I suppose you either mean such a way of preaching Christ, as that the name of Christ must be twice or thrice in every sentence of the Sermon, or else such a way as is

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confined to some particular parts of Christianity exclusive of the rest.

i. As to the first, the very frequent use of the name Christ, this you seem greatly to have at heart, as tho' the whole of preaching Christ depended on it. Thus you tell us his name must
 Pag. 260. be known, and it must *reign and triumph in the discourses that are preached and heard*. But I cannot think that the frequent repetition of Christ's name in a sermon, is a sure sign that the preacher preaches Christ. I have heard some sermons into which that sacred name hath been often introduced, which have had little or nothing of the doctrine or gospel of Christ in them; but on the contrary, many things contrary to and subversive of his gospel: and I have read a couple of sermons upon the subject of preaching Christ, and designed to instruct the world in the direct and restrictive way of preaching Christ, and in which the name of Christ is very frequently used, in which one of the principal commands of Christ is very notoriously transgressed, viz. the sacred law of charity and love. Now I must own that the name of Christ in such sermons is no recommendation of them to me; and I am so far from valuing them the more for the frequent use of that name in them, that I have the stronger dislike to them for that very reason; since nothing can be more dishonourable to that name, than the abuse of his doctrines, and the using of it as a by-name for scandal and party. I am indeed in judgment for the introducing his name, and the doctrines of his gospel, into all our publick discourses; but it should be done with reverence and fear, and with discretion and prudence too: nor can I easily conceive how you or any man living can preach

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Every serious man in the course of his ministry will find it very necessary to insist on a great variety of arguments, that he may suit the circumstances of those who hear him. And this you allow to be right, *p.* 248. where you tell us, that *all sorts of rational, scriptural, evangelical arguments are to be used.* A faithful minister will watch over his people's conduct, and will take the proper opportunities to reprove them for any errors he may observe in it. Now supposing, for instance, you or I should have any person who hears us, who abuses our account of the grace of God to the encouraging himself in drunkenness, dishonesty, lewdness, or any other immorality; I am persuaded you would think it necessary to endeavour the reformation of such a professor, by preaching against these sins. Now how will you bring in the name of Christ, and make it reign and triumph, when you are explaining the nature and obligations of sobriety, chastity, &c. or when you are painting out the natural ill consequences of the contrary vices? I should think the regular method would be first to explain the virtue you would recommend, which I should esteem myself obliged to regard, tho' you never mentioned the name of Christ in the account of it; and if after this

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you should do, what I suppose such a restrictive preacher of Christ as you set up for, cannot forget to do, enforce the virtue from the authority, example, death, and terrors of the Lord, I should look on you as a right gospel-preacher; and indeed as a much better one than if you should be eternally insisting on some other favourite points, so as to neglect pressing men to repentance for their sins, and new obedience to the established laws of his kingdom. And indeed, the question is not how often a man names Christ in his sermon, but whether he preaches sound doctrines and substantial morals, and whether he enforces piety and virtue upon the genuine principles of Christianity. He who doth not this, is no preacher of Christ, how often soever he names him. He who doth it, is a wise and faithful preacher of him, tho' he don't use the word *Christ* once throughout the sermon, but chuses rather to mention him under other characters, viz. those of *our Lord, our blessed Saviour*, and the like, which are as proper and significant as the name and character of *Christ*. One *Office-title* may be more agreeable to you, and sound better in the ears of your hearers, than another. But surely others have an equal liberty with yourself to make use of another *Office-title* if they think fit, nor should you censure them if they do; because 'tis not the character they speak of Christ by, but the things they preach concerning him, that must determine whether they preach Christ or not.

I am very sorry that you, or any minister of Christ should make use of this expression of *preaching Christ*, to keep up animosities and divisions amongst the members of his church; and I believe the world is not a little surprized, to find that

that Mr. Guyse, who at *Hertford* maintain'd the character of a sober and moderate preacher, should at *London* set up for the warm head of a party, and enter into any low methods to maintain and support it. As the Reverend Mr. *Hubbard* acquits Mr. *Coward* from being a *Dictator*, I cannot suppose you have acted this part under his direction, tho' perhaps you might think it would be pleasing to your Patron. What he recommended to his Lecturers, was to *preach the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, that are conversant about our blessed Saviour*; and methinks that of *charity, by which all men are to know that we are his disciples, and which is Christ's new commandment*, and which is to be recommended and enforced by Christ's love in dying for us, should not be out of good Mr. *Coward's* thoughts and intentions, and I think should not have been forgotten by his Lecturers. Surely a gentleman who hath generosity enough to maintain, at his sole expence, a weekly lecture for the preaching Christ, must have been vastly pleased to have had the generous spirit recommended, and the great law of love to all good men explained and enforced. And as the present set of Lecturers have all forgotten this, or waved it, tho' one of the peculiar doctrines that are conversant about Christ, I hope he will order another set of sermons upon this important and godlike subject; or, which I rather chuse, add one more to his Lecturers, and thus encrease them to the number of perfection. And if after mature consideration, he would be so just to my merit as to fix on me, I assure him all my discourses should be on Christ's new law of love; and as he doth not take on him the Dictator, and unwarrantably prescribe what is to be preached, I should be in no pain for his altering
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my subject ; especially as I would constantly enforce the doctrine by the most express authority, and by the example and death of Christ. But whether this project succeeds according to my wishes or no, I am sure that the making such a noise about preaching Christ, and the throwing out censures upon all who do not use that name so frequently as you, and in your way, can't be within the professed design of Mr. Coward's Lecture ; because censoriousness and scandal are not the peculiar doctrines of the gospel that are conversant about our blessed Saviour ; which was the thing he would *have persued by those, who, as Mr. Hubbard says, shall at any time have the honour of bearing a part in this service.*

2. But not to argue with you any longer about the use of a meer word, let us come to what is of more importance, your principal meaning, as I apprehend it, of *preaching Christ more directly or in the restrictive sense*, viz. the preaching upon some particular parts or doctrines of Christianity. For this must be part of your meaning, when you oppose it to the preaching Christ in a latitude of the expression ; and you yourself intimate as much, when you say, that this direct preaching Christ *includes all that hath been, or that can be said of him, under the characters of the Son of God and the Christ.* And here I apprehend that if you have any meaning, you must mean one of these three things ; either,

1. Preaching the doctrines of Christ as opposed to his precepts. Or,

2. Preaching some peculiar doctrines or precepts exclusive of others, or more statedly than others. Or,

3. Preaching the gospel according to your scheme of it, or manner of explaining it.

I. As

Reverend Mr. JOHN GUYSE.

1. As to the first of these, the preaching the doctrines of Christ as opposed to his precepts, I allow this to be a very restrictive way of preaching Christ; I mean a very partial and defective one, and of which you will find no example in the practice of Christ or his Apostles: and I therefore beg leave to recommend the following particulars to your calm and serious consideration.

(1.) That the precepts of the gospel are as direct, immediate, and essential a part of the religion and gospel of Christ, as the doctrines themselves, delivered by the same authority, and equally necessary for the reformation and salvation of mankind. And this you seem to allow your self, p. 262. where you say, that *moral duties are essential to the very being of christianity*. And therefore whatever can be said of our blessed Lord under the characters of the Son of God, and the Christ, of the adorable constitution of his person, of his office-capacities, of prophecies, types and figures, is no more directly preaching Christ, or preaching the things peculiar to, and that are conversant about Christ, than preaching about repentance and good works, of every thing that is virtuous and praise-worthy: because the same gospel that contains the doctrines, contains and inculcates the precepts also, and makes them equally fundamental or essential. The very glory and dignity of Christianity consists in its being a system of the noblest principles and precepts, which are every where interwoven with each other, and which should never be separated either in the pulpit, or out of it. They equally carry the same sacred impressions of divine authority; they are equally necessary to the character of a Christian, and when believed and obeyed, add a lustre and glory to

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to each other. Take away the doctrines of Christianity, the noblest encouragements to piety and virtue are lost; and if men are strangers to piety and virtue in heart and practice, with respect to such the doctrines of Christianity have neither influence or worth; and if there are any preachers who don't improve the doctrines they inculcate, to the engaging men to all the virtues of a good life, they are so far from preaching Christ directly, *i. e.* preaching up the direct intention of Christianity, that they don't preach him at all. And 'tis very strange that you should allow the preaching about the prophecies, types, and figures of the Old Testament to be the direct way of preaching Christ; and yet deny, or be afraid to own, that the preaching upon christian morals is so too: as tho' the drawing mysteries from *Balaam's* ass, and *Joseph's* coat, was preaching Christ to better purpose, than the preaching up men's obligations to live as Christ lived, and hath commanded us to live. In short, every precept and command of the gospel as directly and immediately refers to Christ, as the doctrines of his incarnation, sufferings, death, atonement, righteousness, exaltation and advocacy do. In the same gospel as the one are to be found, the other are; and therefore he who preaches upon all in their proper seasons, directly preaches Christ.

(2.) Christ and his apostles, who should know wherein preaching Christ consists, preached up moral duties, and inculcated the necessity and obligation of them, as strongly and frequently as they did any particular doctrines whatsoever. Christ himself, in his famous sermon on the mount, and indeed in almost all his discourses to the people, taught the multitude the great duties

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duties of morality, pressing them to meekness, mercifulness, the love and pursuit of peace, and the universal practice of righteousness; using no other argument but his own authority, the example of God, the perpetual obligations of his law, and the necessity of obeying it to our entering into the kingdom of heaven. In all that sermon I do not find any thing of his equality with, or subordination to the Father, of his engagements in eternal transactions with him, of types and figures, or the like things, in which you make the direct preaching of Christ to consist. No. He preached plain morals, and pressed the observance of them by plain arguments, and entered into none of the peculiarities of the supernatural and incomprehensible kind. Now did Christ in this Sermon preach Christ or not? I don't remember the word Christ is once used in it. If he did preach Christ, I infer that 'tis possible, Christ may be preached without ever mentioning Christ's name. Or will you say that he did not preach Christ directly? If not, can you inform me what his preaching must be called, if it must not be called direct preaching Christ? Surely his sermon did not consist of somewhat foreign to the nature of his religion, and the design of his coming into the world. If it did, unbelievers will be apt to call in question his wisdom and prudence, since it can be no addition to any preacher's character, that he preaches of things impertinent and foreign to his purpose. If it did not, I infer, and have Christ's example to justify my inference, that preaching against lewdness, murder, hypocrisy, rash censures, injurious names, and the like crimes, is preaching Christ directly, tho' the name Christ be not mentioned;

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if I preach that they are, forbidden by his law, and contrary to his exprefs precepts; and if I shew that the command and example of God, and the example and authority of Christ, lead and direct them to the contrary virtues. And therefore you can have no reason to represent any one, as not directly preaching Christ, when he preaches on these topicks, since he preaches as Christ did, and makes his sermon the model and pattern of his own discourses. And you will not be displeased if I tell you, that to imitate Christ in his way of preaching himself, is your duty, and a greater honour to any man than to imitate any modern head or leader of a party whatsoever.

And as Christ preached moral duties, so did his apostles after him, using indeed some additional arguments, after the death and resurrection of Christ, as the circumstances of those they preached to made it necessary. What did *Peter's* sermon consist of, but proofs of Christ's being the Messiah foretold by the prophets, and a serious exhortation to repentance? And upon occasion of his healing the lame man, he preached the same truth of Christ's being the Messiah, and concluded with the same exhortation to repentance. *St. Paul's* Sermon at *Antioch* is exactly to the same purpose. When he was at *Athens* he preached against idolatry, exhorting his hearers to repentance from the consideration of a future judgment by Christ. And when he preached before the *Roman* governour concerning the faith of Christ, he preached of righteousness and temperance from the same principle of a future judgment. The same may be observed throughout all his letters to particular churches. As he argues against the prevailing errors

errors of those times, he never fails to improve all to virtue and good works, as what was the grand design and intention of the gospel. In his exhortation to *Titus*, after having told him that *the grace of God in the gospel teaches us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in the present world*, he adds, *these things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Put them in mind to be ready to every good work; to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness to all men; and tells him, this is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works; these things are good and profitable unto men.* There are also several of the like advices unto *Timothy*. Would it not be accounted by some congregations legal preaching to preach on these subjects? Dull morality their palates are too curious to relish, altho' ministers are charged by the apostle to preach it, and constantly to affirm it. So that you can have no warrant from Christ or his apostles to separate principles and practice in your preaching; and those who do thus may possibly serve a party, but cannot promote the honour and kingdom of our glorious Redeemer.

(3.) All the doctrines of the gospel, that we have any concern in, or are required to believe as necessary to salvation, are doctrines according to godliness, and should ever be improved by the ministers of Christ to practice. This *St. Paul* declares concerning the gospel-doctrine in general. He calls the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the doctrine according to godliness*, 1 Tim. vi. 3. In his epistle to *Titus*, he styles it *the truth according to godliness*, Tit. i. 1, and speak-

ing of several of the gospel-principles, he calls them *the mystery of godliness*. So that the whole scheme of the gospel is designed to inculcate and promote the practice of true religion and virtue. And when the apostle speaks of any particular doctrines, he never fails to shew their influence and tendency to carry on the same design. The doctrine of his condescension in becoming man he improves to humility and lowliness of mind, and to engage men to *work out their salvation with fear and trembling*, Phil. ii. 3—12. His patience in suffering he inculcates as an argument to promote the same virtue in us, 1 *Pet.* ii. 19, &c. His submission to death he urges as an argument for our dying to sin; and his resurrection from the dead, as a motive to our walking before God in all newness of life, *Rom.* vi. 1—23. His ascension to glory, and being seated at his Father's right hand, he proposes as an argument to repentance, *Acts* v. 31. In short, every peculiar doctrine of the gospel, is in its nature, and original design, a principle of virtue and substantial goodness, and ought to be thus improved by every minister, that would approve himself faithful to Christ, and to those whom Providence hath put under his care. And I cannot help thinking, that if any minister stately chuses to insist on nice and curious speculations, that have no tendency to make men better, he perverts his office, and doth the gospel of Christ a real disservice. Godliness and virtue is the great end of all the gospel-dispensation. 'Tis the main design of Christ's coming into the world to recover men to the worship and service of God; and let any man's faith be ever so orthodox, yet if his life be immoral and habitually vicious, he is an heretick in practice, which

which is the most criminal heresy he can be guilty of. And therefore if any Minister preaches up, either any of the genuine doctrines of Christ, or some peculiar favourite doctrines of a party, without referring all to a good life, he cannot be said to *divide the word of truth aright*, but preaches it *deceitfully*, and shuns to declare to men the whole counsel of God.

(4.) The final acquittance or condemnation of all men depends on their obedience or disobedience to the gospel-constitution. You have a passage in one of your Sermons, that I have already mentioned, that looks towards this sense, tho' I know not how you will chuse to explain it, I will endeavour to explain it for you. 'Tis p. 228. where you tell us, *that duty, repentance, and obedience must be preached as acceptable to God, and advantageous to our salvation through Christ: i. e.* as I should understand the expressions, these things are pleasing to God, as being right in themselves, and the express matter of the divine command; and, of consequence, are of great advantage to men, as they are pleasing to God, or as thro' Christ they derive the favour and approbation of God towards men; because if these good works are acceptable to God, they who do them, must, for this reason, be so far acceptable to the same God; and of consequence repentance and obedience have their proper share and influence in securing men the divine favour, viz. in their present and final justification and acceptance. And this I affirm is the plain declaration of the gospel itself, which can never be evaded by any subtle distinctions whatsoever. Thus our Lord declares, *By thy words shalt thou be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned*, Matt. xii. 37. *Not every one that saith unto me,*

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me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven, Matt. vii. 21. And elsewhere describing the process of the last great day, he tells us who are the blessed of his Father, viz. such as abound in acts of Christian charity and goodness. For these the kingdom was prepared from the foundation of the world; and because they did these things, they are to have their entrance into this kingdom. And on the other hand, the cursed are those, who habitually neglect these good works; who, for this reason, shall go away into everlasting punishment, Matt. xxv. 34, &c. Perhaps some of them will be apt to say, that they have eat and drank in his presence and prophesied in his name. But this will be an excuse of no avail; and as they are found workers of iniquity, the sentence must be, Depart from me, I know you not. St. Paul's doctrine is also exactly to the same purpose; God will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality, eternal life: But unto them who obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul that doth evil, Rom. ii. 6, &c.

St. James also is express in this matter, who tho' he is not accounted by some to be very sound in the point of justification, is nevertheless of equal authority to me as St. Paul himself. Now St. James expressly says, that *faith if it hath not works is dead*. Of consequence, 'tis obedience that gives the life to faith, and therefore is as much more valuable than mere faith, as the soul is than the body which it animates. Hence he declares, *that Abraham was justified*
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by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar; i. e. accepted and rewarded, and treated as the friend of God for this instance of his obedience, flowing from his firm belief of the divine promises. And from hence he draws a general inference, *Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only*, Jam. 2. 17, &c. i. e. a man's future acceptance with God depends, not upon meer belief or faith, tho' the object of his faith is ever so good, but on his submission and obedience to God in virtue of that faith, which gives the life and true value to his faith. This is apostolick doctrine, 'tis evangelizing good works, or giving them the evangelical turn, how much soever some over-curious persons may account it legal preaching; and notwithstanding you seem to call it, *placing works in the room of Christ, and setting them up independant of him*; and of consequence to preach this doctrine in Christ's name, and enforcing it by such motives as Christ hath furnished us with, is as directly and restrictively to preach Christ, as to preach on any other doctrine whatsoever.

(5.) Insisting on meer doctrines tends in its nature to set men loose in their regards to practice. If they hear their ministers perpetually inculcating faith, as the only requisite to salvation, pressing them to an absolute dependance on Christ's righteousness to make up all the wilful deficiencies of their own, buoying up their hopes with the doctrine of eternal justification, telling them that they have no ability, strength or power at all, to promote their own happiness and salvation; that their best works are as filthy rags, placing religion only in attendance on ordinances, which are only the means and instruments

ments of piety and virtue; what can the conclusion be that they will naturally form but this, that to believe as well as they can, is much better than to live well, and that a round faith will make amends for the defects of their virtue, and the immorality of their lives. If meer faith, from its effects, finally justifies, works are certainly unnecessary to salvation; and it can't be true that *God will render to all men according to their works*; and if they are unnecessary, we need not trouble ourselves about them, or take any care to abound in them. Would any man be careful to put on the virtues of the christian life, when he believes that God will not look on them, or have any regard to them? or endeavour to follow after holiness, when he knows he hath no power to do it, and that if he should attain to it, it would have no influence on his future happiness, nor be of any avail to his acceptance with God? If it be sufficient to depend wholly and absolutely on Christ's righteousness, all personal righteousness is an unnecessary thing; and if to believe that I am elected from eternity, and that Christ died for me, will secure my salvation, the Apostle might as well have spared his unnecessary Exhortation, *That we should give all diligence to make our calling and election sure*. Those who hear our sermons will generally interpret them in their own favour, and draw such inferences from them, as will best suit their prevailing inclinations: And if we preach always upon faith and doctrinals, and are sparing in our exhortations to piety and virtue, will be apt to think that we place Christ in the room of works, which is altogether as dangerous as to place works in the room of Christ, and probably make their practice much of a piece with our preaching

ing, by having as little of good works in their lives as we have in our sermons. I say not these things, Sir, to reproach you, who I doubt not have as serious a regard to the morals of the gospel, as you have to the doctrines of it. But as your restrictive way of preaching Christ seems to mean preaching up the doctrines that more immediately regard the person, &c. of Christ, as distinct from his precepts, I cannot think this to be either the duty or prudence of a gospel-minister, nor preaching Christ directly. I rather think it is of very dangerous consequence, and may tend to encourage many in their sins, and make them negligent and careless as to the works of righteousness, which are the fruits of the blessed Spirit of God. And therefore fidelity to God and Christ, whose ministers we are, and a concern for the salvation of the souls of men, should cause us to warn them of their sins, and press on them the virtues of a christian life, by all those motives and arguments, which the Gospel of Christ furnishes us with. It should prevent our setting faith and practice at variance with each other, and at so great a distance from themselves, since they are placed together by the christian revelation, and represented there in the strict conjunction of cause and effect, and are therefore equally necessary to mens acceptance and salvation.

(6.) In the last place, your own account of preaching Christ directly, if there be any meaning in your expressions, must include practice as well as doctrine. Thus you tell us, *it includes his royalties and advocacy as a priest upon a throne, his dominion over all, and his peculiar headship to the church.* Now can you preach of Christ's royalties, without preaching about the constitution

Ibid.

Pag. 234.

tion of his kingdom, the subjects that belong to it, and the end of his advancement to the throne of glory, to be a prince and saviour, viz. to give repentance to Israel, as well as forgiveness of sins? What kingdom can Christ have without subjects? and who can be his subjects but such as pay obedience to the laws of his kingdom? and of consequence to preach obedience to Christ as king, is to preach Christ's royalties, which with you is to preach Christ directly. Again, it takes in Christ's sending his Spirit to guide, sanctify, comfort, and preserve them. But what is sanctification, but our being created in Christ to good works, what but our being cleansed from all iniquity of flesh and spirit, and enabled to perfect holiness in the fear of God? What but the being filled with those graces of the Spirit, which produce the fruits of the Spirit in the life, viz. love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance? as the Apostle describes them, Gal. v. 22, &c. Of consequence, to preach against fleshly and spiritual filthiness, and to press men to abound in these fruits of the Spirit, and to inculcate it upon their consciences, that sanctification by the Spirit of God consists in these things, is to preach Christ directly and immediately. Again, you tell us, it farther takes in all his offices, all the obligations he hath laid upon us, and all the high and sacred regards of duty, gratitude, love, and praise that he deserves and demands from us, in a life of faith in him, and holy obedience to him. If then to preach Christ directly, is to preach a life of holy obedience to him, I suppose it takes in all the instances and particular branches of that obedience; and of consequence he who preaches any particular branch of Christian duty, preaches

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obedience, and therefore preaches Christ directly. He who preaches love to the brethren, against rash censure and hasty judging another man's servants, or concerning chastity, temperance, meekness, or any moral virtue, and enforces his exhortation from the high regards of duty, gratitude, love, and praise that he deserves and demands from us, preaches in your sense Christ directly; unless you mean preaching obedience in general, without ever coming to the particular branches of duty. But I will not suspect this to be your meaning till you declare it, because it will deserve some reflections, which I had much rather forbear. Upon the whole, as the commands of Christ are a principal part of his gospel, and as your direct way of preaching Christ includes the preaching of obedience to Christ, I hope your direct, immediate and restrictive way of preaching Christ must refer to something else; viz.

2. The preaching upon some peculiar doctrines or rules of Christianity, exclusive of, or more statedly than others. And so far I shall agree with you, as to allow, that there are in Christianity several things, some of greater, and some of less importance; and that those of greater concern should be insisted on principally by the ministers of Christ in their publick discourses to their hearers. Amongst the things of less importance, I cannot help reckoning those which you call the incomprehensible kind, especially as far as incomprehensible; because that cannot in the nature of things be of very great importance which is incomprehensible to us, or cannot be understood by us. For instance, the precise distinction between Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as they all subsist in one divine nature, and are

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the one only God, is, I think, of very little importance for us to know, because 'tis incomprehensible, and cannot be understood and known by us. And I am the more persuaded of this, because you gentlemen, who set up for the direct preachers of Christ, and to be the only sound men in the doctrine of the Trinity, differ greatly yourselves about it. You tell us, that *some whom you love and honour have supposed that filiation, or being called the Son of God, hath no reference to his divine pre-existent nature, considered absolutely or irrespectively to his office, but is purely æconomical, and only relates to his being the Messiah: i.e. they apprehend some difficulties will arise in allowing the eternal generation of the Son of God, as that thereby his nature will be derived, and therefore think proper to give up this notion. You, on the contrary, and some others, think fit to argue for the eternal generation, and tell us that Son of God is a title given to Christ antecedently to his incarnation, and irrespectively to his office. One would think you should have produced some plain place from Scripture to prove this, after so positive an assertion. But this you have omitted to do. But not to insist on this, what I would observe, is, that either you who maintain the generation, or those other gentlemen, whom you love and honour, who deny it, cannot be both sound and orthodox in the doctrine of the Trinity, and that this difference between you is in a very important point. If Christ doth not proceed from the Father by eternal generation, the term Son of God will be improperly applied to him antecedent to his incarnation, and irrespectively to his office; and I apprehend that these hyper-orthodox friends of yours will be at a loss how to make out*

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out the proper and distinct subsistence of the Son from the Father. And on the other hand, if the doctrine of the generation be true, your dear friends will tell you, that this will infer that Christ's divine nature is derived, divided, caused, and different from the Father; the consequence of which will be, that Christ is another co-ordinate God with his Father, or subordinate to him; neither of which can be allowed consistent with true orthodoxy. Now what must your people do when the leaders are thus divided? when they differ about a doctrine, the belief of which is, according to them all, necessary to salvation, and about the importance of which they have been preaching and praying, and scoulding for these several years past? Can they with any conscience or honour blame others for differing from them, when they are thus at variance amongst themselves? or can they think that this incomprehensible doctrine is one of those that deserves to be most frequently insisted on, when they acknowledge such difficulties on both sides the question, which they severally take? Surely this can have no tendency to edify the people, tho' it may be advantageous to keep up an interest and party amongst them.

There are two sorts of subjects which are truly of great importance, and deserve to be the almost constant subject of a gospel minister's preaching. The one is those subjects which are plain, easiest understood by, and that will best suit the general capacities of the hearers. These explain'd to them and enforced on them, it is to be hoped, with the blessing and grace of God, will make suitable impressions on their consciences, and give them a sense of sin, of their need of a Saviour, and the great mercy of God in their re-

covery

covery by Christ, and bring them to repentance and faith, that they may be saved. And in proportion as these things appear more evident and plain, there is reason to believe impressions on their minds will be stronger; since 'tis truth apprehended and known, which influences the heart and life, and not dark and abstruse speculations, which gender to strife, and make empty and ignorant men conceited and insolent. For instance, in explaining the generation of the Son of God, you endeavour to confirm your account by certain criticisms. You tell us, that *a learned critick upon Mic. 5. 2. observes, that the act of coming forth is expressed as eternally acting. The verbal noun implies the present, the other words, that present to be eternal; and that because the act, being only acting, not acted, doth not imply, &c.* Now, would it not be marvelously to the edification of a christian congregation, to hear Mr. Guyse thus explaining the goings, or comings forth of the son. You are to consider here, my brethren, *that the act of coming forth is express'd as eternally acting, and the act itself is acting, not acted.* How clear a sense must this curious expression of *an act acting, but not acted*, convey to the minds of the hearers, and what a wonderful insight will it give them into the doctrine of the Son's generation? I am persuaded, that by the help of this criticism they would puzzle half the divines in *Europe*. Men of ordinary capacities would indeed be apt to think, that there could be no real act, but what was acted, *i.e.* perform'd, or at least that it would be but a very imperfect one; and that if the Son of God be eternally begetting, he never was quite begot, or at least that his production is very imperfect, or his generation perpetually renew'd. I suppose, when

When you favour'd the world with this observation of the learned critick, you did not speak of this *incomprehensible mystery of Christ*, just as far as he hath reveal'd it, without attempting to explain it any farther than his own word hath cast a light upon it, according to your own direction, p. 238. But that you intended to give a specimen of your skill in and approbation of the schoolmen, who talk of the *actus Dei ab æterno, indefinites & immanentes, & absque successione prioris & posterioris*. I must beg my *English* Reader's pardon for not translating these words, and explaining them. If there be any *English* to them, or sense in them, I think you have hit it in your, *act acting, but not acted*; which, I think, will equally edify them with the *Latin*, and the *Latin* equally edify them with the *English*. And because you seem to delight in this conceit, you tell us again from the same learned critick, that the words, *this day have I begotten thee*, should be rendered, *Jehovah hath said to me, thou art my son, I am this day generating thee*. I suppose the word *begotten* is turned into *generating*, for the sake of the word *generation*, in the Doctrine you are upon; concerning which, you remark, (1.) *That which can be now said to be done this day, and might be so said yesterday, and may be so said to-morrow, and so on from eternity to eternity, if it could be spoken of any human act, would determine such act to be always acting, never acted; i. e. if something could be that is impossible to be, then something would follow, which it is impossible should follow*. This for ought I know may be true, and I shall not dispute it with you. But what, I beseech you, is an *act never acted*? It must mean either an act never accomplish'd, or continually repeated. Now in neither of these senses can you apply

apply an acting act never acted to the generation of the Son of God. The act of generating is the Father's, and either that act is perfect and compleated, and of consequence the Son is actually generated or begotten, which is the old orthodox doctrine; or else the act is yet performing, and of consequence the Son is not yet actually generated: which I take to be a very unfound and heterodox position.

When you add farther, that *God himself said, so long since, and still says, and always will say—I—this day*—you are desired to prove that God hath any where said so. I must deny it till farther proof. The very expression *this day*, spoils all your criticism, and it must be a new figure, that can make the words *this day*, signify *a long time since*, and *a long time to come*. If there be any natural meaning in the words, *This day have I begotten thee*, it must mean, some particular time and season, when the person spoken of became, or was declared to be God's Son. And therefore I approve the Apostle's referring it to the resurrection of Christ, rather than your meaning, which you can't support, but by the curious hypothesis of an *act acting, never acted*. What you prove from the new version of the Bible and the Rabbins, that the *Hebrews* have no present tense, is no new discovery; nor can I imagine why you or your critick should bring in the new version and the Rabbins to prove what was never denied, unless from a fault common to all great and learned men, who are too apt to make an unnecessary ostentation of their learning. Besides, the context will not allow of your criticism. In verse the sixth, we read, *Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.* נָסַתִּי *I have set*, is in *Præterit. Kal*, as well as the word, you would have

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have translated, *I am generating thee*. And therefore according to you, since the *Hebrew* idiom has no present tense, but expresses it by the præter and future, and since the Rabbins themselves allow this, these words ought to be translated, *I am setting my king on my holy hill of Zion*. But I hope this hath been long since actually accomplished. But not to say more on this, I shall only set down your three inferences, as deduced from your premises, without any observation. *This day have I begotten thee, or am generating thee*. This implies

An act always acting, never acted. Ergo,

1. There is in the Deity, Father and Son, two distinct persons.
2. The Son of God, with respect to this generating, can't be said to be a divided Being.
3. That the Father and Son in the Deity are coeternal, and equally self-existent and independent. *Q. E. D.*

The Son is always generating, never generated.

Ergo, he is distinct, but not divided, from the Father; equally self-existent and independent. *Q. E. D.*

You will please to take notice, that I am not here arguing against the proper Deity of our *Lord Jesus Christ*. In this matter I think I am much more sound than your dear Friends, who, to defend orthodoxy, are fallen from it, by denying the important article of the Son's generation, and who would have been damned for hereticks, had they lived at the time of the *Nicene Council*. Yea, give me leave to say, that I am

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more found than yourself, whilst you make the Son's generation to be only an act acting and never acted, and describe the Father as generating, but never having generated his Son; and thereby deny him in consequence any proper existence or subsistence. Whereas I, treading in the steps of the old sound and orthodox Fathers, believe him actually begotten and generated, and thus allow him his true and proper subsistence.

Upon the whole, since these and other doctrines are so very intricate and difficult, that you who seem to assume the character of Orthodox to yourselves, run into very great differences about them; I doubt not but you will agree with me, that a plain practical sermon, that tends to make men fear, and love, and serve God and Christ, is infinitely more useful, than to preach about niceties, that the preacher can scarce explain, and not one in a thousand of his hearers can understand. *Acts acting, but never acted*, may serve well enough for a critical note at the bottom of a page; but can't, I think, be brought into the pulpit, without the preacher's acting and having acted a very weak part, and leaving and having left his people much more in the dark than he found them.

I am very sensible that the plainness of the gospel-doctrine is no great commendation of it to some persons, who affect to find out mysteries in almost every article of the Christian faith. *Oh this abuse of height and depth!* is that which renders their faith valuable, and they can scarce see any excellency in the gospel-scheme, but that 'tis *past comprehension*. I allow there is an end to be answered by thus representing Christianity, *viz.* to keep the people in a greater dependance upon their preachers. But will this
justify

justify us at the bar of God, in thus throwing an obscurity over all the parts of the religion of our blessed Saviour? Why can't we be content to take it in its original simplicity and plainness? Is it not our duty to make every thing as clear as we can to those who attend on our ministrations? After all we have said, there will remain difficulties, which with all our schemes we shall never be able to solve. But to make plain doctrines abstruse, and increase the number of christian mysteries, is, I think, neither for the credit of Christianity, nor for the advantage of those who hear us. Reasonable men will think, that a revelation from God, designed for the bulk of mankind, should be in the main intelligible and clear, that all who have any concern in it may understand the divine will, and in the practice of it secure his acceptance. And tho' there are some doctrines of Christianity confessedly above our reach, and which no man can pretend thoroughly to explain, yet I am persuaded that the main and essential things are easy enough to be understood, as they lie in the gospel, by every serious and honest mind; and that the preaching on these things hath the truest tendency to do good to men, and bring honour to the Redeemer. And herein I have the pleasure to think that Mr. Guyse is of my mind: for as to *the incomprehensible mysteries of Christ*, you are for *publishing them just as far as he hath revealed them*; and as to other things of Christ, you are for *expatiating* Pag. 238.
upon the great and copious subject, insisting most upon the most important things relating to it, by all the variety of useful representations it is capable of, and drawing out its deep and bidden glories, that they may be exposed with perspicuity and enlargement to open view. So that here I think we

are both agreed, to say but little of *incomprehensible mysteries*, because there is but little said of them in scripture. But as to the most important things, on these we are to *expatiate copiously*, and *draw out their deep and hidden glories*; *i. e.* I suppose the glories the people can't see without our eyes, or those glories that may be obscured by false translations of the text, or wrong glosses of interpreters and systems, or the objections of adversaries; in a word, such glories, which, tho' deep, may be drawn out; and tho' hidden, yet are capable of being *exposed with perspicuity and enlargement to open view*.

But besides these things, if there be any other doctrines or precepts, the knowledge and practice of which the scriptures make necessary to salvation, they will deserve undoubtedly to be frequently insisted on, and seriously inculcated; because that must be of the highest importance in its own nature on which the salvation and happiness of mankind depend. And if upon this foot you should think fit always to preach about faith and believing, because *he that believeth not* is declared to be *condemned*, I shall not oppose you, provided you will not censure me as not preaching Christ, when I press good works as well as faith, because it is also expressly declared, that *without holiness no man shall see God*; or when I preach against the vices of bad men, concerning whom 'tis positively affirmed, that *they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God*. I should indeed think that now and then a sermon about plain Christian morals might be necessary for all Christian Congregations, to prevent their entertaining presumptuous hopes, and to keep them from false dependances
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on Christ; because the very *grace* of the gospel hath appeared to us to teach us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world; and because those who are rich in good works, lay up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come. I allow indeed, that good works should be pressed upon Christian views and principles; and I can assure you, whatever information you have had to the contrary, I have never heard any sermons in the established Church, or amongst the Dissenters, that had not their proper reference to Christ, when they were concerning good works. Some subjects and circumstances may lead ministers to have the principal part of their sermons upon doctrinal points, and at the close to enforce practice by a proper inference. Other circumstances may lead them to insist more largely on a purely practical subject, on a precept or duty plainly commanded by Christ, and in the application to enforce it by Christian principles. In the New Testament we have instances of both these ways. All the beatitudes run in this latter way: *Blessed are the meek, merciful, and peacemakers, for they shall inherit the earth, obtain mercy, and be called the children of God.* When St. Paul preached at Athens, he preached against superstition and idolatry, and exhorted them to turn to the living God, and then enforced the duty from the consideration of a future judgment; and when he preached before Felix concerning the faith of Christ, he first preached of righteousness and temperance, and closed his sermon with the same awful doctrine of a future judgment. At other times, the Apostles used the other way, beginning with the doctrine, and concluding with the practical inference. So that
either

either method of preaching is warranted by the example of Christ and his Apostles; and I think the preaching in one or other of them, is preaching Christ, because it is preaching of things declared to be equally necessary to salvation, which certainly are of the greatest importance and necessity. I will not deny but there are other things not expressly made necessary to our acceptance, which may at proper seasons be insisted on. But I apprehend that this should be less frequently done, and that the preacher should represent it just in the importance in which the scriptures represent it, and not make the belief of doctrines abstruse and difficult in themselves, much less his own interpretations of, and consequences from scripture; which are not declared necessary to happiness, a term of christian communion, or a condition of future salvation; because in so doing he goes beyond his warrant and commission, and preaches not the glorious gospel of Christ, but an uncertain gospel of his own invention. Now if this is what you mean by preaching Christ directly, preaching of those christian principles and precepts, that are best capable of being understood by ordinary christians, and that are of the first and highest importance to be believed and practised, and which you plainly intimate you do; herein I perfectly agree with you, and wish that all the ministers of Christ were like-minded.

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3. But if you should happen to mean by the restrictive preaching of Christ, preaching Christ in your way, according to your scheme and manner of explaining it, I am apt to think we may not so entirely agree. And my first reason is, because if the two sermons you have published about preaching Christ be a specimen of
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your common method of preaching him, you preach him in my judgment with a very unchristian spirit, which I think neither adds to the beauty or importance of your discourses. Had you introduced your sermons with a representation of the love of Christ to men, and of that affection and love to others which he hath made the characteristick and mark of his disciples, it would have well suited the noble subject you were ordered to insist on. But to begin with a dismal moan and lamentation, of the unfashionableness of preaching Christ, &c. may, for ought I know, raise your reputation with some of your hearers for being thus out of the fashion; but is, I think, acting too unkind a part to deserve any imitation.

But not to urge this, as you have been pleased to favour us with your method of preaching Christ, both as to the subject, and its acts, I shall a little consider the specimens you have given in the two sermons of your way of preaching Christ. You tell us, *That the ministers of Christ are to go forth in his name to publish* Pag. 237,
all they find in the bible concerning him, to preach him with all boldness, and to endeavour to set every thing concerning him in a clear and consistent light: to explain the things of Christ as far as they are explicable, and all the incomprehensible mysteries of Christ, just as far as he hath revealed them: to confirm and defend what is published concerning him; to propose and recommend him to the acceptance of those to whom he is preached; to proclaim him to the people, and invite sinners to come in to him for all salvation. I have no inclination to except and cavil against any methods of speaking that sober and good men are pleased to make use of, and am far from blaming you for your man-

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manner of expression. But I cannot help thinking that these things may be expressed in a different manner equally intelligible and proper. Should any other minister of the gospel chuse to say, that we are to publish the whole scheme of the christian religion as we find it in the bible, with all boldness, and in the clearest and most consistent light; that we are to explain the doctrines and duties of christianity, as far as we can, and the more mysterious parts of it as far as revealed; that we are to recommend the belief of it, and enforce obedience to it by all proper arguments and motives, and thus to encourage sinners to submit to the gospel-dispensation for pardon and mercy: Tho' I don't pretend to recommend these expressions as better than yours, yet to say the least, I think they are as proper, as comprehensive, and as intelligible, as those of explaining the things of Christ, and inviting sinners to come in to him for salvation. For what are the things of Christ, the *τα περι του Χριστου*, but the doctrines and precepts of Christ? What can you mean by inviting sinners to come in to Christ, to whom they cannot now come personally as they might have done whilst he was on earth, but their belief of, and hearty compliance with and dependence on his method of salvation as laid down in the gospel? 'Tis true, these things of Christ cannot be preached, without entering into several of the particulars you mention, without putting persons in mind, that he is a *Prophet, Priest, and King*, or that his doctrines are to be believed, his authority submitted to, and his atonement accepted and depended on; that *he is indispensibly necessary for them*, or that the gospel constitution is a necessary provision for their happiness; that

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he is altogether worthy of their acceptance as an able, faithful, and willing Saviour; or that the Gospel deserves their entire and hearty submission to the design of it, as proceeding from the God of truth, and as containing the wisest and most certain method of salvation; and as being the noblest representation of the goodness of God and Christ, and their willingness that we should not perish, but have everlasting life; that he is chosen, appointed and accepted of God to be a Saviour, or that the gospel-method of salvation is of God's appointment and fixing; that he hath taken upon him a saving office, i. e. is appointed of God to be a saviour; that he died in their nature and stead, and employs himself in heaven in his saving office, i. e. is the atonement for sin, and the advocate with the Father in heaven; that he delights that sinners should employ, receive, try, and trust him in it, i. e. will accept and bless them if they submit to him under all his characters, or believe and obey his everlasting gospel. 'Tis in this sense the passages of Scripture you mention are to be understood. Such as believing in Christ and coming to Christ, expressions that plainly mean the same thing, viz. acknowledging his mission from God, and our hearty compliance with the design of his Gospel; for Christ cannot be believed in but according to the Gospel-representation of him, nor can we now come to him any otherwise than by searching and believing his Gospel. And when Christ is said to dwell in our hearts, it cannot mean any local residence there, but his dwelling in us by the word of his truth, and the graces and influences of his Spirit. And when you tell us, that careless sinners must be roused up to convince them of their need of Christ, and being brought home to him, and that they must be intreated to embrace

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brace him as he is freely offered to them in the gospel, as you cannot mean their being brought to his person, or their embracing him corporally, I think you must mean their acceptance of, and compliance with that method of salvation from sin and misery, of which he is the author, and which is laid down and fixed in his gospel, by repentance, faith, and new obedience. And in all this sinners are to be directed to Christ for all

Pag. 249. *assistance and success; i. e. they are to consider what helps Christ hath promised to them in his gospel, and of consequence to pray for them, and faithfully to improve them.*

Pag. 250. In like manner you say, *Christ is to be recommended to believers for their farther acceptance of him and devotedness to him.* What can their acceptance of Christ mean, but their consent to be governed and saved by him according to the appointed method of his gospel? And what is it farther to accept of him, but to have a more confirmed faith, and manifest a more entire submission to his authority and will? This is what the Apostle means by *cleaving to the Lord*, viz. adherance to their profession as Christians, and by *walking in Christ as they have received him*, i. e. living agreeable to their faith and profession as Christians. When you farther tell us, *Christ is to be recommended to them that they may have fellowship with him, and with the Father through him;* I suppose you mean, that they are to be put in mind of the great advantages they enjoy, by being called to the knowledge of the gospel, Christ having procured for them all the benefits of salvation, and amongst others, their reconciliation and peace with God, which is the true Scripture-notion of having fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. And finally,

Pag. 251. you add, *In a word, all that he is in himself, and*
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is to them, and all that they are made to be in and by him, and are obliged to be to him, should be set before them; that is, if I understand the use and meaning of these monosyllables, believers and good Christians are to be put in mind of the doctrines relating to the person of Christ, which is the same thing as to tell them *all that he is in himself*; and they are to have preached to them all the doctrines relating to his mediatory undertakings, which is to preach to them *what he is to them*; and they are to be told what their privileges are as Christians, which is to tell them *what they are to be made in and by Christ*; and lastly, they are to be excited to good works, and to abound in the fruits of righteousness, which is to excite them *to be what they are obliged to be to Christ*. The expressions of *being in Christ*, *cleaving to Christ*, *coming to Christ*, *Christ's being made to us*, and the like, are, I allow, Scripture-expressions, and as such I reverence and value them, and am far from blaming you or any Gentleman for using them. But why should they not be explained equally with other expressions; why must the continued use of them be made a criterion of preaching Christ, any more than certain other expressions of Scripture? These terms were used with great propriety by Christ and his Apostles, and were well understood by those to whom they were spoken; and do in reality contain no mystery in them, but a plain and obvious meaning, *viz.* that of being real Christians by faith and practice, and as such interested in the great blessings that are the peculiar promise of christianity. And since the whole strain of your two sermons runs upon the word Christ, *his being to them*, *their being made in and by him*, and *their being obliged to be to him*,

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you would do kindly to give us the meaning to these terms, if you mean different from other ministers; or if you do not, it will be but honest to undeceive your people, and tell them you intend the same thing by them that others do. Altho' I reverence every scripture-expression, yet I cannot put a sacredness and solemnity upon some phrases more than others, but think they are all fit in their turn to be used and explained; and therefore I as much value the expression of *being justified by works*, as I do that of *being justified by faith*, or *being in Christ*; because delivered by the same spirit of truth, and reconcileable with each other in their true and proper meaning. If in order to preach Christ, these Scripture-expressions, which you delight in, must be always made use of, why should not some certain modes of expression be made use of in our christian prayers? And if any, why not those, concerning which Christ hath said, *When ye pray, say?* And yet some congregations except against the use of these, for what reasons, you and they best understand.

I shall only add on this head that preaching Christ in scripture, always means, preaching either the doctrines or precepts of Christ, *i. e.* preaching Christianity in some essential branch or part of it. In the first beginnings of Christianity the Apostles insisted more especially on the first grand article of it, *viz.* Christ's being the Messiah, because they were then peculiarly sent to the house of *Israel*. Thus in your text *he preached Christ in the synagogues*, that is, this article of the christian religion, that *he is the son of God*. Or he preached that the person called Jesus Christ, whose religion he had before opposed, was *the son of God*, or the promised Messiah, which sense of

of the proposition is very plain, notwithstanding you represent the sense would be, *he preached Christ that he is the Christ*, if not understood according to your manner of explaining it. Again, the Apostles *ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ*, Act. 5. 42. and what that was, we are told ver. 30, 31. viz. preaching that *God had raised up Jesus after his crucifixion, and made him a prince and saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins*. So that they preached Christ's resurrection, his advancement to a throne, and being made a saviour, according to the antient prophecies, the necessity of repentance, and that the certain advantage of it should be forgiveness. This is preaching Christ, or Christianity, or the doctrines of the gospel, whether in the latitude or with restriction, I shall not dispute. Thus also I suppose *Philip* preached Christ to the *Samaritans*, at least he preached him in this manner to the Eunuch, when he told him that *Isaiab's* prophecy referred to Christ and foretold his sufferings. 'Tis needless to mention other passages. And that preaching Christ is nothing else but preaching the word or gospel of Christ, is plain from other expressions. Thus 'tis sometimes called *preaching the word*, Act. xiii. 5. *preaching the word of faith*, Rom. x. 8. *preaching the gospel*, 1 Cor. ix. 16. *preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ*, Eph. iii. 8. i. e. the wonderful love of God to men in him, or the invaluable benefits of redemption by him. And in the same sense the Apostle *James* tells us, that *Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him*, Act. 15. 21. i. e. not merely the person or name of *Moses*, but that religion which God established amongst the *Jews* by his mediation; and therefore preaching Christ, is preaching that religion which God established amongst Christians
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by his mediation. And this, if I mistake not, Mr. *Guyse* himself is abundantly sensible of. For notwithstanding he dwells so much upon the expression of *preaching Christ*, as that one would imagine he meant nothing but the name or person of Christ, yet now and then the real truth and meaning drops from him. Thus you tell us that *in the language of the gospel-dispensation, preaching the gospel and preaching Christ are convertible terms, or terms of the same import.* And again, *Preach Christ, or to publish the gospel of his kingdom.* Now upon this confession, what is there in your distinction of *preaching Christ in the latitude-way and restrictive-way*, but preaching either the whole, the half, or a less part of the gospel? And what is it to *preach Christ directly and immediately*, but to preach directly and immediately the gospel? When you talk of *publishing, defending, proposing and recommending Christ to persons acceptance*, you do and can mean nothing more, according to your own explication, than publishing, &c. the gospel. When you say that *Christ must be proposed to sinners and believers*, you mean in reality the proposing the gospel to them for their acceptance and continued obedience. And finally, when you offer *some considerations to recommend this preaching, or to shew why ministers of the gospel should preach Christ*, they are only considerations to shew them why they should preach the gospel. This is really very kind and friendly, and all the world is highly obliged to you. But methinks it would be more candid and open, if you would always speak your mind freely and plainly; and not express yourself in such a manner, as may give occasion to any to take you in one sense, whilst at the same time you have another to yourself. When you

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you came to explain what it is to preach Christ, surely you ought to have told them at once, that it was preaching his gospel that you meant. But instead of this, you open with your *latitudes* and *restrictions*, your *directlies* and *immediatelies*; as tho' preaching Christ and preaching Christ's gospel were quite different things: whereas at last, when the truth comes out, you mean entirely the same. I hope your congregation and good Mr. Coward will take notice of this, that when Mr. Guyse talks about *preaching Christ*, he means just the same thing as I do, *viz.* preaching the gospel; and this may be done without entring into your stiffness and peculiarity of style, and set forms of speech, many of which need explication, and seem to be so much insisted on for no other purpose, but to support the reputation of orthodoxy, and to be *the Shibboleth* of a party.

What your scheme of religion is, I do not pretend to understand. I shall not question the soundness of it. But supposing that some of your brethren should differ from you, in some particular points that have been matters of dispute amongst Christians, by what right can you appropriate the title of orthodox to your self and party? And why must you be the only men in the world that preach Christ, for insisting on your own particular notions? Should you for instance believe, that *Christ died for none but the elect*, and that all the rest of mankind are reprobated, or passed by, and have no other benefit by Christ and his gospel, but to be the more miserable for not believing it, tho' not being elected to the end, they could not be elected to the means; should this be your opinion, I doubt not but you apprehend you have scripture-ground for it: in consequence of this belief, 'tis possible you may
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preach the doctrine to your people, and I doubt not but some of them will applaud you for doing it, and think it sound preaching of Christ. But can you in good conscience think, that this or any other disputable doctrine, in which the wisest and best men have so widely differed, are the essential vital doctrines of the gospel, or that the preaching of Christ consists in preaching them? By the same rule he who believes that *Christ died for all, that he is the propitiation not only for ours, but for the sins of the whole world; that he is the Saviour of all men, and that he is willing that all may be saved*; shall make this doctrine the standard of orthodoxy, and the preaching it in opposition to your notion, the true and proper way of preaching Christ. And thus to preach Christ will at last come to this, viz. Every man's preaching the peculiar distinguishing notions of his party. 'Tis hard that we should be fallen to so low an ebb as this, as to think the things wherein we differ to be of greater importance than those, in which we are all agreed. And yet I am afraid 'tis too much the case. Whence else the late stir about soundness and orthodoxy in the faith, damnable errors and heresies, &c. with which the prayers, and preachings, and prefaces of some men have been so very full? What hath been the occasions of all their unkind reflections, and harsh censures of others, as *not preaching Christ, and denying the Lord that bought them*, but not preaching in their scheme, not subscribing their words, nor being of one mind with them in matters, wherein they don't appear to be of one mind amongst themselves? Even in an article which they think of the highest importance, the Divinity of the Son of God, they are divided, and out of their great zeal for orthodoxy,

orthodoxy, are some of them turned downright hereticks. In the point also of justification they are no more agreed than in the other ; some affirming it to be from eternity, and others as positively denying it. So that if they are agreed, 'tis not in principle, but in a certain form of words, which sound well, and pass for current coin, because stamped with the superscription and image of orthodoxy. If all who differ from them either in modes of expression, or their distinguishing doctrines, must be unsound ; I should recommend it to these gentlemen to assume the glorious character of infallibility, and publish their creed of orthodoxy, for the better regulating our faith and preaching for the future. I am indeed in some hopes that the world will soon be blessed with such a creed ; sound in proportion to the length and bulk of it. But till the press is delivered of its burden, I see no remedy but that we must go on as we have hitherto done, preaching Christ according to the best of our knowledge. I have charity enough to believe, that the ministers of every denomination do not preach *with the enticing words of man's wisdom*, that with the Apostle *they have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully* ; that they do not preach *as pleasing men but God*, and that they seriously endeavour, *by manifestation of the real truth, to commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God* ; and however they may any of them differ from me in any particular points, yet I doubt not but that they truly preach Christ, as to the main doctrines of christianity, those of *repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*. As to other things, Mr. Guise and his dear friends are orthodox to

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themselves, and so are all who differ from them. And therefore whatever be your scheme or system of faith, you have undoubtedly a right and liberty to preach it, but not to set it up for the standard of other mens belief, till by a publick edict you are made dictator in the faith; nor to censure others as not preaching Christ, because they don't use your modes of expression, nor preach upon some peculiar points, that may be useful to you, and savoury to your people.

Thus, Sir, have I taken the liberty to go thro' your account of preaching Christ; and upon a review I can't understand wherein the difference consists between *preaching Christ in a latitude, and directly and restrictively*, as you have explained it; nor what it is you have particularly in view, by *preaching Christ in the restrictive way*. The Reverend Mr. Hubbard in his preface to good Mr. Coward seems however to be much of your mind, and tells him and the world, that *the main view of his lecture was to have Christ directly and immediately preached*, and that his patron had been witness to a very happy and eminent success of so managing the gospel-ministry, as to make our blessed Lord the reigning theme in it; and that his forefathers sought to bring Christ into the souls of men, rather than to present him to the fancy, and the remembrance of this excited in Mr. Coward this laudable endeavour of contributing towards the revival and continuance of the same conduct. This is kindly said of his patron, and modestly of the rest of his brethren. But that gentleman would do well to acquaint the world, what difference there is between preaching Christ directly, and preaching directly upon the principles of the christian religion; and what there is in Mr. Coward's main view more than in the views of other

other gentlemen who support other Lectures. I hope that *happy and eminent success* of so managing the gospel-ministry, as to make our blessed Lord (I think it should have been Christ) the reigning theme in it, to which he hath been witness, relates to himself; and that this, as well as the remembrance of Mr. Hubbard's forefathers, excited now in him this laudable endeavour to contribute towards the revival of so managing the gospel-ministry, as to make Christ the reigning theme in it. But, I pray, when was preaching Christ or the christian religion discontinued? I am very sorry if it hath been thrown out of the pulpit of Stepney, for I never heard that it was discontinued any where else, and do not think it much for Mr. Hubbard's reputation that he needed Mr. Coward's contribution to engage him to preach Christ directly, and to seek to bring Christ into the souls of men. If he hath been employ'd in presenting Christ only to his bearers fancy, he hath been a very fancyful preacher, and been employ'd by his congregation to a very whimsical purpose. As for my self, I wish well to Mr. Coward's lecture, and success in every valuable purpose to every minister employ'd in it. I dare not indeed make my self of the number, or compare my self with some that commend themselves, nor stretch out my self beyond my measure, as tho' I reached unto you. But this I can truly say, that tho' some indeed may preach Christ of envy, strife and contention, and others also preach Christ of good-will and love, yet notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea and will rejoice. But what hath this patron and his lecturers in view more than any other christians and ministers of Christ? If it be the support of a party, I envy not him the ho-

nour of erecting and maintaining a lecture for this purpose, nor them of being engaged in it, and carrying it on. The more generous design would have been, to have solid christianity preached up in all its parts, without dictating to his lecturers, or censuring their sermons; which hath such an appearance of humour and pride, that the largest contributions cannot cover. To preach the christian religion in all its parts, is the only true and direct way of preaching Christ; and this custom I hope the ministers of Christ have: and I have therefore the pleasure to think, that if Mr. Coward's lecture was erected to *revive the direct preaching Christ*, it was erected to revive what was never dead, and which I hope will live and flourish when Mr. Coward's name and lecture shall be no more.

But I have done with both; and shall now proceed to the considerations you offer, to recommend this direct preaching of Christ; and

Pag. 251. you tell us *it sufficiently pleads for it self*. And I think it doth indeed plead for it self, that every minister of Christ should preach the religion of Christ, according as God is pleased to enable him to understand it; but that every man should preach it in your way, is not, I think, so self-evident a matter, but needs some farther clearing. However, tho' you apprehend there *should be little occasion for arguments to set the governing aim of gospel-ministrations towards him*, yet you

Pag. 252. tell us, that *he who knows any thing of human nature, and observes the turn of the present age, may easily see that something of this kind can't be unseasonable*. I think I have not been altogether unobservant of the turn of the present age, and as far as I am a judge, there is some turn evidently to two things, infidelity on the one hand, and

and uncharitableness on the other. And if you therefore mean that it can't be unseasonable to insist on the great foundations of christianity, and to lay before men the substantial proofs of the truth of it, and when the very foundations are attacked, to persuade all christians to bear with one another amidst their lesser differences; herein I would gladly join my heart and hand with yours. But if you mean any other turn of the present age, with which professed christians and christian ministers are chargeable, and particularly the turn of loving to leave Christ out of their sermons, as I hope your insinuations are not true, so I think your motives might have been spared.

The first of them is, *Christ is a subject truly excellent, and every way worthy to be preached.* Pag. 252.
What, I beseech you, of Christ? The bare word, or the things concerning him; the name, or the religion of Christ? If you mean the name only, you mean nothing; if his religion, every christian in the world agrees with you. Christ is a subject truly excellent, undoubtedly christianity is so, and every way worthy to be preached; nor is there any thing else that we have to do as Christ's ministers but to preach christianity, nor can Christ be preached any other way but by preaching his religion: and I hope every faithful minister is led thus to do by inclination as well as duty. What you tell us of the *wonder and songs of Angels* is true; but pray what did they wonder at, and sing songs of praises for? Was it for the name Christ, or was it merely for the person of Christ? Or rather, was it not for the wonderful methods of divine grace in the redemption of the world by Christ? And therefore the true inference you should have drawn from

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from hence is, That the gospel which contains this wonderful method of salvation by grace, is every way worthy to be studied and preached; and that ministers should think it their glory to proclaim and recommend this grace or favour of God in the gospel to their hearers; and that as we are more nearly concern'd in it than angels, we have so much the higher reasons to glory in it. This is St. Paul's meaning in *glorying in the cross of Christ*; not, surely, in the material wooden cross, but in the method of our redemption by the death and sufferings of Christ. Here I allow with you that *there is boundless room and scope for the widest thoughts to expatiate, and for the most exalted genius to entertain it self; and that the farther we go into this noble subject, the more it approves it self to us, and the higher its glories rise upon us.* But they must be very wide thoughts indeed, that can *expatiate* upon the bare name or person of Christ, irrespectively to the doctrines and truths concerning him, and delivered by him. Even your genius would be at a loss to entertain it self here, and the farther you looked into it, you would be covered with deeper darkness instead of discovering new rising glories.

Pag. 255. Again, *preaching Christ is peculiarly suited to the gospel-dispensation.* Now, as you cannot preach Christ without preaching on the gospel-dispensation, was ever any thing so self-evident and demonstratively true, as that preaching the gospel-dispensation is suited to the gospel-dispensation; preaching christianity is suited to the nature of christianity; and that a religion of which Christ is the author *is appropriated to him, and takes its denomination and authority from him?* Is this any new discovery and are there any of the ministers of this dispensation, *that is founded*

on Christ, and that is full of Christ, who neglect to preach Christ, or, as you say, to publish the gospel of his kingdom? The distinguishing characteristics of this dispensation are faith in Christ, and repentance towards God, and love unfeigned to the brethren. And who are the ministers that leave faith and repentance, and brotherly love out of their sermons? If you know of none, as I am persuaded you do not know many, to what purpose are all your declamations and questions upon this head? Who are they that act this incongruous part, or so unworthy their character, who pretend to a ministry in Christ's kingdom? Can any man that reads such passages as these, imagine any thing less from your questions and complaints, but that the present set of ministers are turn'd Pagans, Turks or Jews, and that there are none besides Mr. Guyse and Mr. Coward's lecturers that preach this glorious dispensation we are under? Your expostulations are a real charge upon your brethren, and whatever may have been your secret intentions, the world will judge so.

Again, 'tis the special office of gospel-ministers to Pag. 256. *preach Christ: i. e. 'tis the special office of gospel-ministers to preach the gospel. Do you think any gospel-minister needs to be told this? Or do you know any of them that baptize persons into any other faith but the faith of Christ, or who administer the sacred memorials of his death for any other purpose, but to bring Christ to the remembrance of those who receive them? God forbid that Mr. Guyse should be the only minister who looks upon himself as a steward of the mysteries of God. I hope we all look upon our selves as the servants and ambassadors of God for Christ, and believe that there is a necessity laid upon us to preach his*

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his Gospel; and I trust in God we are no more *unmindful of, or unfaithful to our trust, no more treacherous and injurious to Christ, than you or the most zealous of your brethren.* What will standers-by think of such exclamations, but either that your passion wanted vent, or that you look upon your brethren as a company of men false and treacherous to God and Christ, and as *ashamed to own him and preach him to the world?*

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Again, *the most desirable success of the ministry very much depends on preaching Christ: i. e. put into plain English, No minister can expect to promote the interest of christianity without preaching it; or no minister can expect to convert any man to christianity without telling him wherein christianity consists.* If I judge right, the only success we can desire as the ministers of Christ, is to bring men to the faith and obedience of the gospel. This is truly desirable, and the most desirable success we can wish. And was there ever any man that desired to do this as a minister, that did not endeavour to do it by preaching the gospel? Was any mortal ever so stupid as to imagine, that he could have any success as a minister of Christ by preaching *Socrates, Cicero or Mahomet?* Or can any one be so weak as to imagine, that Christ's promise *to be with his ministers to the end of the world,* belong'd to any but those who preached him and his holy religion? Surely we are not yet run to these dregs. We all allow that *the spirit of*

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Christ loves to breathe in the doctrines of Christ; and I hope also you will allow, that it equally loves to breathe in the precepts and commands of Christ: and 'tis evident beyond dispute, thro' all the acts of the apostles, that 'twas *this preach-*
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ing of Christ, viz. in the whole compass of his religion as they had opportunity, that *was owned and honoured of God with all the glorious and amazing successes recorded there*. And indeed how could any thing else have succeeded? How could Jews or Gentiles have been converted to the faith of Christ, but by preaching the religion of Christ? Or what had the apostles to do but to preach that gospel with which they were entrusted? But what hath all this to do with your restrictive way of preaching Christ? If any one observes the conduct of the Apostles, he will find that their sermons were suited to the circumstances of those they had to do with. When they preached to the Jews, it was about their sin in crucifying Christ, and that the characters of the Messiah were fulfilled in Christ. When they preached to idolatrous Gentiles, they preached against idolatry and superstition: When before very wicked men, 'twas about righteousness, and temperance, and judgment to come. And therefore if *ministers would not be unconcerned, whether they study and labour in vain*, they should study and labour not to satisfy and comply with the prejudices of their hearers, not to preach some chosen doctrines, and omit others, not to set up faith in opposition to practice, but to preach Christ in the whole extent and compass of his gospel, and not *shun to declare to men the whole counsel of God*.

Again, *the honour of God, and of christian religion, are nearly concerned in preaching Christ*. I think this is the same thing in different words with the former head; for wherein the success of christian ministers differs from their promoting the honour of God, and of christian religion, I do not very well understand. But not to insist on this, you tell us *all its vitals* (christian religion)

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gion) *spring up and thrive under his influence.* But what can you mean by this *springing up and thriving of vitals*, but either that the essentials of christianity are delivered by Christ, or that the success of christianity depends on his advocacy and mediation? These things will be allowed you. But if as you add, *his name is not known, or if it don't reign and triumph in the discourses that are preached and heard, how shall this glory of God be seen and advanced in its most endearing and exalted strains?* I know not which most to admire here, the sentiments or the stile. *Names reigning and triumphing, glory seen and advanced in its most endearing and exalted strains*, are very *endearing and exalted strains* indeed. But how often must the name be mention'd in order to its reign and triumph? *Est modus in rebus.* You will do well to settle it in the case before us, For my own part, I had rather hear a sermon full of the substantial doctrines of Christ's religion, than of Christ's name, when the preacher uses it impertinently, or to sanctify opinions that are contrary to his religion; and cannot help thinking that the glory of God is *advanced in its most endearing and exalted strains*, when the preacher either confirms my faith as a christian, or inspires me with renewed resolutions to live the christian life. These are *tender and important points*, and I will answer your question in the affirmative, that the ministers of Christ ought to be concerned for them, and I hope would have been concerned for them, if your questions had been wholly spared.

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Again, *preaching Christ is delightful and improving to one's own and others souls.* Very right, when the preacher understands what he preaches, and preaches for the improvement of himself and

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and his hearers. 'Tis true, *the riches of Christ are unsearchable*, there are more excellencies in christianity than we can now discern ; instances of God's goodness we can never sufficiently adore. But if you preach of those excellencies that can't be understood, I humbly suppose you don't preach to the understandings of your hearers or your own. And if so, how is such preaching *delightful to one's own or others souls*, viz. when the preacher is in the clouds himself, and keeps his congregation in impenetrable darkness? except they should both happen to be of such *supernatural and incomprehensible* constitutions, as to have their souls delighted and improved by ignorance and darkness. *The sphere of gospel-truths*, when their evidence appears convincing and clear, when the preacher wisely explains them, and solidly improves them, is undoubtedly very *refreshing and entertaining*, and they are very *delightful advantageous themes to think, and talk, and hear of*; and the soul that lives most in the *midst of the light and influence of this sphere*, can't but say, *Lord! 'tis good to be here*: i. e. in plain words, a minister takes pleasure and doth good in preaching the gospel, and sober serious christians take pleasure and receive good by hearing it preached. Ergo, *preach Christ restrictively*, according to Mr. Guyse's notion of it. I don't doubt but you receive and do good by preaching Christ in your way. But I beseech you give others leave to take equal pleasure in their ways of preaching, who tho' they move not in your sphere, may move in as refreshing a one to themselves, and as entertaining a one to others. I hope the art of *raising mens spirits, refining their tempers, and filling them with divine transports*, is not confined to your method of preaching Christ, but

that those who frequent other congregations can sometimes say with as much propriety and truth as your hearers, *Lord! 'tis good to be here.*

Pag. 261. Lastly, *there are but few in our days that preach Christ, and but few that regard him.* This is a very important observation, and requires some very substantial proof; or else indifferent persons will think, that when you were preaching this, you were preaching scandal, instead of preaching the gospel of Christ. And as you have given yourself great liberty on this head, I must beg leave to deal as freely with you, by drawing out the several branches of your charge, and making the necessary reflections on it.

Ibid.

You tell us, that *the greatest number of preachers and hearers seem contented to lay him aside.* It would be kind if you would tell the world, from whence your information comes. Have you conversed with the greatest part of the hearers, or have they waited on you, to tell you their minds, and declare their satisfaction and content to *lay Christ aside*? If you have gone only upon jealousy and suspicion, you have made a very unchristian representation, and acted contrary to that noble principle of charity, which is greater than faith, and without which you are, with all your zeal, no more than as *sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal*, and which should have taught you, *not to behave yourself unseemly, to think no evil, but to believe and hope all things.* Or if you have entertained this opinion of the generality of Christians upon the reports of some envious busy-bodies, you will do well to consider, that such shall not be allowed to dwell in *God's holy hill, who backbite with their tongues, who do evil to their neighbours, or who take up a reproach against their neighbour.* A worse reproach

proach you cannot fasten upon any, than this, that they *seem contented to lay Christ aside*, i. e. to part with their christianity and their hope of salvation by the gospel.

But what less is to be expected from them, when the *greatest number of preachers are as content to lay Christ aside*, as their hearers? I am sorry you thus take on you the character of the accuser of the brethren, and should be glad to know, whether you intended this compliment for the ministers of the establishment, or for those dissenting ministers that may somewhat differ from you in the method of preaching of Christ. To be sure Mr. Guyse, and his dear friends, who deny the generation of the Son of God, and all Mr. Coward's lecturers, are not content to lay Christ aside, but love to move in *this most refreshing and entertaining sphere*. It seems then the greatest number of preachers are all those who are not of his and their church; and they lay aside Christ contentedly because they don't preach Christ according to the standard of their orthodoxy. This is really a very candid and ingenuous representation. I can't however persuade myself to think, that you have heard the greatest number of preachers, and can prove either from their publick performances, or private conversations, that they are so content as you imagine to lay aside Christ: If you can't, you have done very ill thus to represent them to their hearers, and deserve a severer reproof than that of *The Lord rebuke thee*. You would certainly, and with a great deal of reason, think it very hard treatment, should any minister, because of some peculiarities in your sentiments and sermons, publicly represent, that you and your congregation seem content to lay Christ aside.

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And with what conscience, as a minister and as a christian, can you allow yourself to do to others what you are unwilling they should do to you? Are not you under a law to Christ as well as others? Or have you the sole privilege of venting scandal, without being accountable for it at the bar of God? Justice to Christ's ministers and people, and justice to yourself, demand it from you, either to vindicate so deep a charge by naming the persons you point at, or to humble yourself before God and them if you have charged them hastily and without proof. If one may judge by the sermons, and treatises published in defence of christianity, of the sentiments of those who are not of your denomination, they seem as firmly to believe, and to have as great regard for the honour of christianity, as you or any of your brethren without exception. How then could so random a charge escape from a good man and a christian minister? You have no other excuse, but either the necessity of your affairs, or the warmth of your zeal.

Pag. 261. But you farther complain, that *his name is seldom heard of in conversation, unless in a way of strife and debate, or, which is infinitely worse, in a way of reproach, contempt and blasphemy.* I am heartily sorry you fall so often into such very bad company, where there is such quarrelling, and blaspheming the name of Christ: Or perhaps you mean, that this is the case in all conversations, but such as you have the management of yourself. But in this you are very much mistaken. There are conversations, and many of them, where you have not the honour to be present, which are guided by friendship and decency, where there are no other debates, but what become good men, and impartial enquirers

ers after truth, where the name and religion of Christ is honoured, and never spoken of by way of contempt and blasphemy. One would be apt to think by such a representation that you had your spies in all companies, and secret intelligence of every thing that passes in conversation, or the spirit of prophecy to inform you ; or else I am sure the charge neither becomes you as a man or a christian. That there are some conversations managed in the manner you represent, I fear is too true : but God forbid it should be so amongst the greatest number of preachers and hearers. But if it were so, have you nothing as criminal and melancholy to complain of amongst yourselves ? Have you no pulpit-debates, no sermons in which the name of Christ is seldom or never mentioned but in a way of strife ? In which personal quarrels and party-differences have been preached instead of the peaceable gospel of Christ ? I will not press you too hard by saying more, and doubt not but you are truly grieved at these things, and heartily pray God that this reproach may in his own due time be entirely wiped away from us. I shall only add on this head, that I am afraid that ministers themselves have given too much occasion for the evils you complain of, as far as they are true ; and that the debates and quarrels of private conversations will not be likely to cease, till we learn ourselves how to differ amongst each other with charity, and preserve our pulpits free from party-invectives and reproaches.

You go on, *I am persuaded it (Christ's name) never entered less than at this day into our practical godliness, into our solemn assemblies, into our dealings with God, into our dependencies on him, expectations from him, and devotedness to him.* You mean,

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I suppose, that there is a very great increase of infidelity and vice ; tho' by the connection of your complaints, you seem to have a quite different intention, viz. that christians and christian ministers seem to have nothing of Christ in their practical godliness, &c. Now as you allow that there are still such things as practical godliness, solemn assemblies, expectations from, dealings with and devotedness to God ; methinks these appearances should incline you to the most charitable side, to think that all these things are kept up with a regard to Christ and his religion. It hath been my opinion, and experience hath confirmed me in it, that when once men have thrown off their belief of Christianity, they have done it generally for the sake of being more easy in their vices, and have in consequence thrown off all their dealings with God ; and therefore I cannot help thinking, but that all who frequent the solemn assemblies, and live a sober, righteous, and godly life, and are devoted to the service and fear of God, do it as much upon christian principles as any good men have done it in former ages ; nor can I conceive how christian ministers can preach on men's expectations from God, and devotedness to him, without making the gospel of Christ their rule and standard ; nor how their hearers can form any expectations from him, or devote themselves to him, but upon the principles and according to the directions of the gospel. If you know of any to whom the charge belongs, you will do well to put them in mind of their fault, and endeavour their reformation. It seems you do, for you tell us,

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That the present modish turn of religion looks, as if we began to think that we have no need of a mediator, but that all our concerns were to be managed with

with God as an absolute God: i. e. as tho' ministers and people were going to turn down-right infidels and apostates from the Christian faith. How many there are who have already gone into this fashionable religion, I cannot tell; but as you seem so well acquainted with the modes and fashions of the town, I hope you can, and will. As for myself, I am not apprehensive that Christianity is in such danger, and think it never stood on such known foundations of evidence and truth as it doth at this day. And tho' there always have been, and ever will be infidels, who love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil, yet I don't find that the generality of ministers and people are verging to infidelity, and throwing up the doctrine of Christ's mediation and advocacy. Serious Christians of all persuasions are agreed in their need of this, and I hope discern the wisdom of God in such an appointment for the security of their happiness and salvation; and I think this insinuation equally groundless and unreasonable with the others. I can but guess at your meaning in the expression, of managing our concern with God, as an absolute God; I suppose you mean with God, exclusive of a mediator. But how doth the doctrine of a mediator alter the absolute perfection of the divine nature, or his absolute right in and propriety over his creatures, i. e. render God less absolute than he was before? The mediation of Christ is the absolute appointment of God, an appointment of mercy and wisdom, an appointment in consequence of his real love and compassion to mankind, and of his resolution and readiness to reconcile sinners to himself; an appointment however that doth not alter his nature, or the eternal purposes and counsels of his will. And

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therefore we have still to do with *an absolute God*, as that means a God absolutely perfect and unalterable ; tho' all our transactions with him and expectations from him ought to be directed, and managed by those discoveries he hath made of his own purposes of mercy in the revelation of the gospel of his son. And if your intention was to fix this charge on the greatest number of your brethren, that they deny this, 'tis far from being true in itself, and I am sure more than you'll be ever capable of proving, how strong soever your inclination may be to it. But grant it, that they do think, that *all their concerns are to be managed with God as an absolute God*, I should have thought you should not have reprov'd them for this, because I apprehend some of your dear friends will think this very sound doctrine. *Absolute sovereignty, absolute election, and absolute reprobation or preterition*, have been amongst some persons very *endearing and exalted strains* ; and their very first principle of religion hath been that of an *absolute God*, and their *widest thoughts have expatiated upon the noble subject*, and they have esteem'd it *the most refreshing and entertaining sphere that one would wish to move in*. If you differ from them in this point, and some of your people should know it, I am apt to think they would question your soundness in the faith ; and I must needs say, that your bringing it as a criminal charge against *the greatest number of preachers and hearers*, that they think *their concerns are to be managed with God as an absolute God*, looks like a sly insinuation against the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty, and the consequent doctrines of absolute election and preterition. Whether or no they ought to demand some explication on this head, I leave to their prudence and charity to determine.

But

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But your accusation runs to a yet greater length. You enhance and aggravate your charge against them, by adding, *The religion of nature makes up the darling topicks of our age, and the religion of Jesus is valued only for the sake of that, and only so far as it carries on the light of nature, and is a bare improvement of that kind light. All that is restrictively christian, or that is peculiar to Christ, every thing concerning him, that hath not an apparent foundation in natural light, or that goes beyond its principles, is waved, and banished, and despised.* This is asserted by the reverend Mr. Guise of the greatest number of preachers; 'tis asserted by him of his brethren the ministers of Christ; and that we might not mistake at whom he pointed the charge, he immediately adds, *that moral duties themselves are usually harangued upon without any reference to Christ.* I am almost astonished to see how far an intemperate and furious zeal may carry a good man beyond the bounds of charity and justice, and draw him into assertions which he himself cannot prove, and which have no foundation in the truth of things. *The religion of nature* is unquestionably a glorious thing, and I am persuaded you yourself will allow it, when you consider coolly what it is, and wherein it consists. The religion of nature means either those branches of religion which the natural unassisted reason of men is sufficient to discover, and can demonstrate to be true, without the aid and assistance of divine revelation; or that religion which is agreeable to and founded in the reason and nature of things. Now in either of these senses I suppose you will grant that natural religion is worthy to be embraced and practised, and that revelation itself can't contradict the principles of truth, nor contain any thing

in it contrary to the relations and fitnesses of things: if it doth, then revelation, and particularly Christianity, is false, and must be looked on as an institution either unfit for God to give, or unfit for men to receive, or perhaps both; and I imagine that neither of these will be much for the credit of Revelation and Christianity. If then there are any principles of religion certain, true and demonstrable, previous to divine revelation, and which would have been so, had there never been any revelation at all; surely it cannot be improper even for a christian minister to give his hearers at proper seasons a view of those principles, to shew them their foundation in truth, that they are adopted into Christianity, and that Christianity is thus far reasonable, and worthy their acceptance and belief. And I think this the more necessary, to prevent persons from becoming a prey to superstition and enthusiasm, and being imposed on either by cunning pretenders to revelation, or others who, thro' ignorance or design, may corrupt and pervert a real revelation. This hath been the method taken by those, who in my judgment have written best in defence of Christianity, and done the most eminent service to this glorious cause. But if to insist on the religion of nature be so unpardonable a crime, so very heathenish and unchristian a thing, why don't some of you restrictive preachers of Christ try if you can defend the christian religion in your way? Fairly draw out your proofs, and see if you can support the cause, without laying the foundation of that natural religion, which you so much deny, and shew such a sovereign contempt of; for no other reason that I can conceive of, but a suspicion that some of your
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own principles will not stand the test, and want this solid foundation to support them.

The open opposition that is made to Christianity, shews the necessity of examining it to the bottom, and reducing it to its original simplicity ; and I think the ministers of Christ cannot more seasonably and suitably employ themselves, than by giving their people the clearest view they can of the whole evidence and proof of the gospel. And if some of them have begun with the principles of natural religion, I suppose it hath been in order to lay the surer foundation for the support of Christianity. And I appeal to your own conscience, whether you know any one man in the world, who pretends to the character of a christian minister, that hath preached upon natural religion, with any other view and design but this, or who hath ever made in his sermons such a representation of the perfection and sufficiency of natural religion, as could give any just reason for suspicion, that it was his darling topick above the religion of Jesus himself. If any such a one there be in the world, I am sure he is obliged, in common honesty, to quit that sacred profession and calling ; if there be not, he who makes such a representation of his brethren, breaks one of the fundamental precepts of natural religion, which I suppose real Christianity can never dispense with.

As to my self I own, that I sincerely value and honour the religion of Jesus, for its perfect harmony and agreement with the principles of natural religion, or those principles of religion which the reason and nature of mankind point out, and which are demonstrable by reason to have their foundation in truth. I admire the glorious constitution of christianity, in that it
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carries on the light of nature, and is an improvement of that light. The great duties it recommends are certainly founded in the nature of things, and all its great doctrines agreeable to reason; because worthy of the perfections of God, and suitable to the circumstances, the wants, the hopes and the capacities of men. Even every thing that is, as you call it, *restrictively christian, or that is peculiar to Christ*, deserves belief, and is worthy of all acceptation, because, if I am not mistaken, 'tis reasonable, and sober minds may discern in it the impressions and proofs of the divine wisdom, power and mercy. It gives men a nobler view of the divine perfections, and especially of the riches of the grace and goodness of God, and lays the strongest obligation upon all to make the returns of gratitude, love and duty. And therefore if you mean, that *the religion of Jesus is valued only so far as it is a bare improvement of the light of nature*, i. e. so far as it directs men to the discovery of nobler truths than bare natural unassisted reason could do, so far as it gives men the clearest knowledge of their duty, so far as it gives the best displays of the divine attributes and perfections, and sets before them the wisest and surest method for their recovery from sin, and death, and misery; I am not afraid or ashamed to own, that I value christianity only for the sake of these things. And I beseech you, what is it, for which you have such an high value for christianity? Do you value it merely for the sake of those things which are incomprehensible? or for the sake of things **you** have no knowledge of, and can't possibly understand? If so, go on and admire; you will have none to envy, and, I believe, but few to imitate you. Undoubtedly every new truth dis-

discovered to the mind, relating to God, the original and causes of sin and misery, the method of our redemption, every new motive represented to our souls, every new promise, every doctrine peculiar to Christ, and his mediatory undertakings, is an improvement of natural light, as they lead the reason of men to those discoveries, which otherwise they would have been absolutely destitute of. And doth not the very excellency and peculiar advantage of christianity consist in it? Doth not he who values and esteems it for these reasons, value and esteem it for those reasons, which alone render it preferable to the religion and light of nature? Shew, if you can, wherein the excellency of christianity consists besides.

But why do I thus argue, upon a supposition that is absolutely inconsistent with your real intention, and declared meaning? Your insinuation is quite of a different kind, *viz.* that *the religion of Jesus is only valued so far, as it confirms natural Religion*, as standing in opposition to the peculiars of the revelation of God by Christ; because, say you, *all that is restrictively christian, or that is peculiar to Christ, every thing concerning him, that hath not its apparent foundation in natural light, or that goes beyond its principles, is waved, and banished, and despised.* This is nailing down the charge indeed upon your brethren. *Every thing peculiar to Christ is waved, banished, and despised*; waved from the pulpit, banished from conversation, and despised by the generality of preachers and hearers. Good God! to what lengths of infidelity, or rather censoriousness, are we run! Awake, oh all ye apostate clergy, ye unbelieving ministers and hearers, hear the dreadful charge against you, and tremble! You have *waved, banished, and despised every thing re-*
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strictively Christian, every thing peculiar to Christ, if the representation and charge of the Reverend Mr. Guyse is true: a charge brought against you in the face of the whole world, a charge solemnly delivered in the name of God, and again and again repeated, that the few christians who are left may understand and mourn your apostacy. Surely, Sir, you must have some strong and convincing proofs to justify a charge of such importance. Had you said, that some things, which by some persons have been accounted the peculiars of christianity, have been waved, &c. you would have had some foundation of truth to support you. But that *every thing that is peculiar to Christ is waved, &c.* by the generality of preachers and hearers, is, I hope, too bad to be true. What are the doctrines of Christ's incarnation and birth, his holy life, his miraculous works, his meritorious death, his glorious resurrection, his ascension to heaven, his intercession at the right-hand of God, and his coming to judgment, waved, banished and despised? Are they not either the chief subjects on which ministers preach, or the great motives by which they enforce practical truths? These are all things *peculiar to Christ*, and have not any foundation, much less an apparent foundation in natural light; *i. e.* they are properly matters of divine revelation, which the natural reason of mankind could never have discovered: tho' since their being revealed they commend themselves to the consciences of men, and are undoubtedly agreeable to the truest reason whatsoever. And to shew this, is, I apprehend, the proper business of ministers this day, when the whole doctrine of mediation is made by some an objection against the truth of the christian revelation. And
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if the doctrine of mediation with God can be defended upon the principles of reason, I apprehend 'twill be of service to christianity thus to defend it; and if you cannot support it by reason, or at least shew it not to be an unreasonable doctrine, I beg leave to know by what reason you will support it. If the excellency of your faith consists in believing without, or contrary to reason, you may possibly be commended for the strength of your faith, but I am sure cannot for the wisdom of it. And if this be the meaning of your complaint, that the generality of preachers endeavour to shew the reasonableness of the peculiar doctrines of christianity, relating to Christ, and that the generality of hearers love to have it so, I think they deserve great commendation and praise; and act more worthy their natures, and more acceptable to God, than if they swallowed down doctrines without any examination, or made the impossibility of any thing an argument or reason for believing it. Wise men will always consider their natural light as given them, not to be put under a bushel, or to be extinguish'd, but to direct and guide them into knowledge and truth. And when they hear gospel-ministers running down and inveighing against natural light, or that reason which God hath granted them, they will naturally suspect imposture and interest, a design to betray them, and make a property of their consciences and purses. And therefore, tho' after all our attempts there will remain difficulties in revelation, that we may not be able to account entirely for, yet certainly the more evident the peculiar principles of it appear, the more agreeable they certainly are, and can be discerned to be to the reason and judgment of

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if the doctrine of mediation with God can be defended upon the principles of reason, I apprehend 'twill be of service to christianity thus to defend it; and if you cannot support it by reason, or at least shew it not to be an unreasonable doctrine, I beg leave to know by what reason you will support it. If the excellency of your faith consists in believing without, or contrary to reason, you may possibly be commended for the strength of your faith, but I am sure cannot for the wisdom of it. And if this be the meaning of your complaint, that the generality of preachers endeavour to shew the reasonableness of the peculiar doctrines of christianity, relating to Christ, and that the generality of hearers love to have it so, I think they deserve great commendation and praise; and act more worthy their natures, and more acceptable to God, than if they swallowed down doctrines without any examination, or made the impossibility of any thing an argument or reason for believing it. Wise men will always consider their natural light as given them, not to be put under a bushel, or to be extinguish'd, but to direct and guide them into knowledge and truth. And when they hear gospel-ministers running down and inveighing against natural light, or that reason which God hath granted them, they will naturally suspect imposture and interest, a design to betray them, and make a property of their consciences and purses. And therefore, tho' after all our attempts there will remain difficulties in revelation, that we may not be able to account entirely for, yet certainly the more evident the peculiar principles of it appear, the more agreeable they certainly are, and can be discerned to be to the reason and judgment of

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those who examine them, they will find a more ready reception, and a more entire and hearty belief. And if so be both preachers and hearers do wave, banish and despise things absolutely unintelligible in themselves, and that have no other proof but mere dogmatical assertion, and which have no influence to make them holier and better; even let them go on to do it, provided ministers will preach and their congregations will hear the plain, evident and practical truths of the gospel of Christ Jesus.

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But it seems you have a charge peculiarly against ministers on this head. Your hand was lifted up, and you were resolved to strike home. *Even moral duties themselves, which are essential to the very being of christianity, are usually bargained upon without any evangelical turn, or reference to Christ, as fruits of righteousness to the praise and glory of God by him. They are placed in the room of Christ, are set up independent of him, and are urged upon principles and with views ineffectual to secure their practice, and more suited to the sentiments and temper of an heathen, than of those who take the whole of their religion from Christ.* I am very glad for the concession you have made in the beginning of this most christian charitable paragraph, viz. that *moral duties are essential to the very being of Christianity*; I suppose you mean they are an essential part of it, and essentially necessary to the character of a christian, and to every man's entrance into heavenly happiness; and I therefore suppose, that gospel-ministers may and ought to preach about moral duties, to explain the nature of them, and press the necessity of them to salvation and happiness. And I suppose also, that ministers ought to practise what they preach, to be patterns of humility,

lity, meekness, forbearance, charity and love; otherwise their hearers will think, that they are for laying burdens upon the shoulders of others, which they don't care to carry themselves. And herein you should have been an example to your flock. But it seems the *generality of preachers are*, in your opinion, nothing better than mere *haranguers*. Now, not to make the deserved reflections on your contemptuous way of treating your brethren, in representing them as meer empty haranguers, I shall content myself with saying, that I don't apprehend they deserve such a character from you, who are so very well versed in the art of haranguing and declamation, and know how to raise your peoples passions, without any real foundation to support them: of which, to go no farther, the two sermons I am considering are an abundant proof. But let us attend to your reasons. *Moral duties are usually harangued upon without any evangelical turn*. What is this same *evangelical turn*? Is it not placing them upon the same foundation that the *evangelists* doth? Is it not declaring them to be essential to the very being of Christianity? Is it not to press them as necessary to mens acceptance with God, and letting our hearers know that their final condemnation or acquittance at the judgment-seat of Christ depends on their works, as they shall be found good or evil, according as Christ, and the evangelists, and the apostles have again and again declared? If you mean any other turn, 'tis not worth while to enquire what turn it is. 'Tis not the turn of the gospel, nor a turn agreeable to common sense and reason; but your own turn, from which I shall not stay to turn you aside.

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But *they are usually harangued upon without reference to Christ, as fruits of righteousness to the praise and glory of God by him.* Who then, I beseech you, do they refer them to? To *Confucius*, or *Mahomet*, or the Pope, or *John Calvin*, or *Martin Luther*? I am afraid, if the truth were out, the reason of your complaint is, because they refer them to Jesus Christ only, and not to one or other of the names I have mentioned, who are all of them very considerable persons, but none of them oracles, or standards of the faith with me. I suppose however, that they preach out of the bible, and tell their people that their text is part of the word of God, and bring now and then a scripture to confirm what they say, and put their hearers in mind that they are under obligation to moral duties; as they regard the honour of God, and would walk worthy their profession as christians. The most heathenish preacher that ever I heard in church or meeting, haranguing on moral duties, said as much as this. And can you not discern a plain reference to Christ in this, and other such like general expressions? Perhaps the *name Christ* may not *reign and triumph* so much as you recommend. But still if Christ be in the sense, the arguments and motives, the sermon is full of Christ, and hath sufficient reference to him. He who preaches on a text out of the *New Testament*, thereby refers his hearers to the authority of Christ. If he presses any single virtue from the pleasure it affords the mind, from any present advantage that attends it, from the natural and intrinsic excellency of the virtue it self, from the consideration of its being lovely, reputable and of good report; in all this there is a plain reference to the example and doctrine of Christ,

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because Christ and his apostles recommended virtue with the very self-same motives and arguments. If he enforces it by the consideration of a future judgment, and its necessity to mens acceptance with God thro' Christ, is not this referring it to Christ as one of the fruits of righteousness, to the praise and glory of God by him? I think it much more so, than it would be to tell them, that *all their best works are as filthy rags*, and have no influence upon their acceptance and salvation; which is to debase the real excellency of goodness, and hath, as I apprehend, very dangerous consequences. For when we have persuaded people of this, what signifies pressing them to good works? Can we expect success, when we press them to put on *rags*, and to adorn themselves with *filthy rags*? If this is the real character of our best works, when we press men to forsake their sins, and to abound in the fruits of righteousness, what do we more, than desire them to part with one set of nasty rags for another? An excellent commendation this of virtue, and an admirable persuasive to good works! I do not wonder that after such a representation of virtue, any should deny it to be a necessary condition of salvation, and to have any influence upon mens acceptance with God. If ~~it~~ hath not, what arguments shall we make use of to enforce the practice of it? If we speak of gratitude, I am afraid strong habits will prevail against it, and that inclination will draw more powerfully than gratitude, especially as they apprehend their condition may be safe without their giving this proof of gratitude. If we tell them the fruits of righteousness are *to the praise and glory of God by Christ*, will they not be apt to deny it, after they have

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have been told, that all their righteousness is as filthy rags? Can they imagine that God can receive any Glory from such things as these? No. This is *haranguing on moral duties without the true evangelical turn, and reference to Christ, and a denying them to be fruits of righteousness to the praise and glory of God by Christ.* If your reproof was levelled against these, 'tis just; tho' I hope this is not the case of the generality of preachers.

But your aim was different; for you go on and tell us, that *they* (moral duties) *are placed in the room of Christ*; i. e. they are so harangued on, as to set aside the necessity of Christ's righteousness, death and intercession. It might easily be retorted, that there are some others who harangue so on the righteousness of Christ, and attribute so much to faith, as to vacate the necessity, and weaken the obligation of moral duties. But I will not recriminate, and my reason is, because many good men don't see the consequences of their own opinions, and because I don't think it just to charge men with consequences they themselves deny; and I should have thought that you would have acted the more candid part, had you not fixed it on ministers, that they place moral duties in the room of Christ, but shew'd that their principles would naturally infer this. Your present representation looks as if you pretended to search the heart, and judge of mens secret views and purposes. How else can you be sure, that they do place moral duties in the room of Christ? They may think differently of the necessity and influence of moral duties from you, and yet have as high an opinion of, and as real a dependance on the merits of Christ's death, and the power of his intercession as you, and even abhor the thought of placing them in the room of Christ. It is indeed

deed a kind of expression I don't understand, and, with others of the like kind, seems to be the language of a party. I can understand nothing more or less by it, than their ascribing such an influence and efficacy to moral duties, as renders the whole of Christ's mediation unnecessary, or else their thinking about them in a different manner from the reverend Mr. *Guyse*. Whether the latter be true, I cannot affirm, because I can but guess at your opinion about them; tho' if this were the case, I humbly presume 'tis not so very plain a consequence, that they place moral duties in the room of Christ. As to the former, 'tis a matter of such great importance, that I would not willingly fix such an accusation upon any man, or body of men in the world, without the strongest grounds of certainty, because 'tis nothing less than to charge them with a designed subversion of the whole gospel of Christ. The most that is ascribed by those protestants, who ascribe most to moral duties, is, that they are the fruits of the spirit, that they are the condition of eternal Salvation, and that they are acceptable to God, and thro' the merits and mediation of Christ shall secure to all true believers the possession of eternal life. But how doth this overthrow the doctrine of Christ's Mediation? The very allowing moral duties to be fruits of the Spirit, is a plain proof, that they believe them wrought by the gracious operation and influence of the Spirit; which I can assure you is a doctrine far from being held only by you and your friends. And when they speak of them as the conditions of Salvation, they mean that they are commanded by God and Christ, and are absolutely connected with Salvation; so that they who do them not, shall not be saved; and they who do, shall, according to the

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constitution of the gospel, and the provision of divine mercy, obtain eternal life. This connection indeed they do not think to be meerly arbitrary, but according to the reason of things. They apprehend that 'tis placing the happiness of men upon the true foundation, in perfect consistence with God's character, as the wise and holy governour of the world ; because they cannot imagine any thing to be more pleasing to an holy God, than the holiness of his creatures ; any thing more acceptable to him as the governour of the world, than the obedience of his subjects ; any thing so immediately to intitle them to happiness, as a proper disposition and meetness for happiness ; which meetness they think consists in that internal purity of the heart, and those consequent fruits of the spirit or moral virtues, which they apprehend necessary to make even the vision of God himself delightful and satisfying. They allow at the same time this appointment to be wholly of grace and mercy, that they are beholden to the attonement and blood of Jesus for the pardon of their sins, and they depend on the virtue and efficacy of his advocacy, for the acceptance of their persons and services ; denying all claim of merit, because they know the imperfection of their best services, and the infinite disproportion there is between what they do, and the promised recompence of obedience. In this scheme 'tis evident that moral duties are not put in the room of Christ. For the attonement of Christ is allowed, and the great end of it confessed, which is to render sinners capable of pardon and mercy. His intercession and advocacy are abundantly acknowledged, since the acceptance of mens persons and services are made entirely to depend on it. I have not enlarged on
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this head, to enter into any dispute with you about justification. You may assure yourself you shall never be disturbed by me for meer sentiments. My design is only to let you see, that tho you and other serious ministers and christians may think that the righteousness of Christ imputed to men, and received by faith as the hand of the soul, is only respected in their justification; yet that there is room for charity and brotherly love to those, who are in the scheme I have represented to you; and that you have not acted a kind and friendly part, in charging the generality of ministers with placing moral duties in the room of Christ; who possibly may search the scriptures with equal sincerity and impartiality with your self, and, to say the least, be equally skilful in the knowledge of them.

The following part of your charge is much of a piece with the former. *They (moral duties) are set up independent of Christ.* And is it not too true, that faith and Christ's righteousness have been sometimes set up independent of moral duties? And yet 'tis very probable that these consequences will not be allowed on either side: And therefore neither you nor I ought to turn accusers. Your accusation is undoubtedly rash, viz. that the generality of ministers set up moral duties independent of Christ; which I am persuaded will be denied by every protestant divine in Great Britain. I have heard many in the Establishment, and amongst the Dissenters, preach on these things; but never heard one that asserted that they were sufficient to salvation irrespectively to Christ, or that they would entitle them to happiness, unless they added to them dependance on the merits of Christ's death, and his powerful intercession at the right hand of God. And I must take the

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liberty to tell you, that tho' such charges seem to flow from you very easily, your brethren despise them, and pity the man that fishes for a reputation and character at the expence of others, and endeavours to make himself popular by assuming to himself the sole honour of preaching Christ, and representing others as scandalously deficient in it, or wilfully despising it.

Pag. 262. But I am almost weary of remarking on such a subject, and am glad I am drawing to a conclusion. If moral duties are set up independent of Christ, 'tis no wonder you should add, that they are urged upon principles and with views ineffectual to secure their practice, and more suited to the sentiments and temper of an heathen, than of those that take the whole of their religion from Christ. And may I not ask you, whether your entering into mens souls, and judging of their views and intentions, is not only not suited to the temper of one that professes to take his religion from Christ, but also not to the sentiments and temper of honest heathens themselves. Supposing I should tell the world, that Mr. Guyse preached these two sermons, with the sentiment and temper of a flatterer, and a man-pleaser, to gratify his patron, or with a view to heighten his own character for orthodoxy, or to draw a croud of hearers to his lecture, or to encrease his auditory and subscriptions at his own church, or meerly to serve a particular party he belongs to; would not the whole world deservedly censure me as acting a mean part, beneath and unworthy my character as a minister and a christian? I am sure honest and impartial men must condemn me. And yet 'tis thus you use your brethren. 'Twas not sufficient that you charge them with urging moral duties upon principles ineffectual to secure their practice:

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You go deeper, and ransack their very hearts and souls, and make their *views as criminal, as you do their principles ineffectual*. Here 'tis beyond my power to make any reflections. I leave this part of the charge to God and your own conscience. He will judge between you and them.

Principles however come under our notice. And what are these ineffectual principles you speak of? Do they urge moral duties, as indifferent things? Do they tell men God sees no sin in his elect? That they are not under a law to Christ? That they have not any power or ability whatsoever to perform their duty? That they are absolutely passive in the work of conversion? That their best works are as dung and dross, and of consequence of no intrinsic value in themselves? That they are required only in point of gratitude? That they are barely *advantageous* to men, but have no influence on their acceptance and salvation? Or that their final justification depends on their being clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness, exclusive of all regard to their own personal holiness, and new obedience? I am persuaded you don't think the generality of preachers in this scheme; and I would hope also that you don't charge their principles with being ineffectual to secure the practice of moral duties, because they don't enforce them with such arguments as these. I am convinced by what I have read and heard, that the generality of preachers urge moral duties upon quite other principles, and that are much more effectual to secure their practice, *viz.* from their intrinsic excellency, the precepts of the gospel, the example of Christ, the influence of his death and resurrection, their absolute necessity to salvation and happiness, the end and design of the

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promise and gift of the Holy Spirit, which is to *create us anew in Christ*, and to make us a *peculiar people zealous of good works*. Do you know of any who stately omit these arguments and motives? Do you know this to be true of the generality of preachers? If not, why do you lay so invidious a charge against them? And if they urge moral duties on these principles, is this any thing like the sentiments and temper of an heathen? Doth it not look like the temper of those who take the whole of their religion from Christ? I beseech you think over this matter once more, before you account the generality of your brethren as heathens and publicans, and learn to think a little more candidly of them, who by their carriage to you, since you have commenced a *London Divine*, have deserved a much better treatment at your hands. I am apt to think you know nothing of the sentiments and temper of many, and but little of any of them, besides the few of your own party. Had you expatiated in the commendation of some of their tempers and sentiments, I am persuaded no one would have contradicted you. Their eminent learning, their valuable writings, their stated sermons speak their praises, and would have abundantly shewn the justice of your best panegyrics on them. But let me tell you, that the liberty you take in censuring all the rest as preaching with the sentiments and temper of heathens, is such a specimen of your own sentiments and temper, as shews too plainly that they both want a little correction and amendment.

Page 262. After you have thus laid and fastened the charge, you passionately cry out, *How many sermons may one hear that leave out Christ, both name and thing, and that pay no more regard to him*

him than if we had nothing to do with him ! To which I answer, I believe, and hope not one. Pray how many have you heard, since your settlement at London, in which there hath been neither the name Christ, nor the thing Christ ? By your own confession, moral duties are essential to Christianity, which takes in precept as well as promise, and the whole of our duty to God and man ; and therefore one would think that they who preach on moral duties should not deserve to be charged with leaving out the thing, tho' they don't name the name ; and that when they preach out of the gospel of Christ, they should not be accused of paying no more regard to him, than if they had nothing to do with him. What if after all they pay him as much regard as you and your admirers, and have as much of the thing Christ with less of his name, as you have with more of it ? Perhaps they think there is a decency and propriety necessary in publick discourses, and that the thing is of more importance than a constant unnecessary repetition of his name. They may also think that there are some subjects necessary to be insisted on, as foundation-truths to support the superstructure of Christianity, in which there may be no immediate occasion for the use of that sacred name. And if they should, will you, in the presence of God, and at the future awful tribunal of the Son of God, maintain this charge against them, that they pay no more regard to Christ, than if they had nothing to do with him ? If you will, thither they will, and do appeal for justice ; and this is their comfort amidst all the opposition they meet with in their work from professed friends and avowed enemies, that they are not to be judged by weak, and partial, and peevish men, but by him
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whose sentence will be according to truth. Hard indeed is the condition of some ministers. Unbelievers despise us for our faith in Christ, and our very brethren, with whom *we could join in sweet communion*, and whom we honour and love for their services in the Church of Christ, because we are supposed to differ from them in lesser matters, publicly reproach us as being treacherous to the interest of Christ, and paying no more regard to him, than if we had nothing to do with him. *Father forgive them*, for we hope *they know not what they do*.

Pag. 262. Was the case as you are pleased to represent it, you might well cry out, *What a melancholy symptom, what a threatening omen is this!* But as you have over-loaded your charge, your *omens and symptoms* might as well have been spared, for I take your omens to be as visionary, as your symptoms are imaginary. But it seems the omens are fulfilled, and the symptoms are followed by the effects they threatned. *Do we not already feel its dismal effects in the growth of infidelity, in the rare instances of conversion-work, and in the cold, low and withering state of religion amongst the professors of it, beyond what hath been known in former days?* So that here are omens, and the verifying of omens, symptoms of diseases, and diseases themselves all crouding together; so that 'tis almost impossible to distinguish the one from the other. But you will allow me to ask, Do you discern these dismal effects in the growth of infidelity, the rare instances of conversion-work, and the cold, low, withering state of religion amongst the professors of your own congregation? If you do, what, with all the name or thing, have you to glory in more than those, whom you accuse of paying no regard to Christ? Or are these

Ibid.

these effects to be discerned only in the congregations of your brethren? Would to God your ministrations were successful according to the prayers and wishes of your heart. I must confess, could I envy you in any thing, 'twould be in this, to see you made instrumental to the conversion of all that heard you. But I dare not allow myself even in this, and trust in God I shall always rejoice in the success of others, tho' I should have occasion always to complain with respect to myself; *Lord, who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed!* But yet I would still hope, that the Spirit of God doth not reside wholly with you, and that Christ hath not forsaken other christian assemblies wholly to rest on yours. Possibly we may have our share of success, and be witnesses to some instances of conversion-work; and I hope in God such instances will be continually multiplying upon us.

When you ask, *May not these things be charge-* Pag. 262.
able in great measure on a prevailing disuse of preaching in Christ? I answer, if the charge was true, it undoubtedly might. But as it is not, I cannot help imputing the dismal effects you speak of, to quite other causes. *Doth infidelity grow?* I am apt to think, 'tis owing, amongst other things, to the corrupting the original plainness and simplicity of the gospel by human mixtures and additions, to the multiplying articles of faith, to stamping disputable opinions with the character of fundamentals, and making the belief of human explications and consequences as necessary to Salvation, as repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; to mens altering the terms of christian communion and fellowship, to the scandal raised by ministers themselves from their own

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own temper and conduct, making zeal for a party pass as a certain mark of salvation, and so recommending dependance and meer faith, as to exclude the necessity of virtue and substantial piety. If these things are to be found amongst any christians and ministers, if there be any real reason for such complaints, I do not wonder to see infidelity spread, and the cause of Christianity every day declining. I refer you to the books written in favour of infidelity, and the quotations that have been made in them from time to time from the writings of christian divines, for your fuller conviction in this matter.

Again, *Are the instances of conversion-work seldom and rare, and is the state of religion amongst the professors of it cold, low, and withering?* Revive, oh! God, thine own work, and suffer not the ministrations of the gospel of thy own son to be thus any longer without success. If I may be allow'd to guess at any particular reasons, distinct from those which may at all seasons be alledged; I should think, that the bringing party-differences into our pulpits, the mixing them with our prayers and sermons, the venting personal resentment instead of preaching the gospel of Christ, the inflaming the passions of our hearers against others that differ from them, the insisting on nice and curious speculations instead of plain and practical truths, the depreciating good works and moral duties, and the leading men to, and encouraging them in false dependances for salvation and happiness; I should think these and the like things, when and where-ever they obtain, very probable causes of the cold, low and withering state of religion. Alas! how can it be expected, that if men employ their zeal about lesser indifferent matters, they should have any left,

left, for the substance and power of godliness? How can it be otherwise but that religion must be in a cold and withering state, when their love and brotherly affection grows cold, and they are led to believe, that censoriousness and rash judgment are christian virtues? *For he that loves not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* True religion can never flourish but as the spirit of love grows more diffusive and generous. Love is the great command of the gospel of Christ, and indeed, the fulfilling of the whole law. And if I know my own heart, I had ten thousand times rather be instrumental to warm the heart of a single man with love to God and Christ, and the whole family of Christians upon earth, whatever be their distinguishing names, parties, and sentiments, than gain over multitudes to any particular sect of Christians, or to my own sentiments in any of the mysterious, difficult and controverted points of christian speculation. And if I am condemned by man's judgment for this, and censured as having heretical opinions to cover under the disguise and cloak of charity, I hope I shall account such censures as my honour; and to the last day of my life encrease in charity, which is the truest image of the best of beings, and the noblest preparation for happiness in his promised kingdom and presence.

I should have done, but you have one inference Pag. 266; so extraordinary, that I cannot pass it by without observation. *Thirdly, Let it be your great concern to use and improve the preaching of Christ.* I suppose you mean, to frequent and improve the preaching of Christ, because you add, *if ministers are to preach Christ, the people are to hear him preached.* Now this inference, as it

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stands in connection with your premises, is thus: Since the greatest number of preachers seem contented to lay Christ aside, since they wave, banish and despise all that is peculiar to Christ, since they urge moral duties upon principles and views suited to the temper and sentiments of an heathen, and pay no more regard to Christ, than if they had nothing to do with him, oh melancholy symptom! oh threatening omen! since the case is thus with the greatest number of preachers; therefore, thirdly, *Let it be your concern to use and improve the preaching of Christ: i. e.* Come to me and my friends, who preach Christ in a christian manner. Don't go near those heathenish preachers. *Our lips keep knowledge, and you should seek the law at our mouth, for we are the messengers of the Lord of hosts.* I do not charge you with this meaning, tho' I believe any impartial man would judge it to be so from the connection. If by your exclamations, and groans, and sad outcries against other ministers, you intend to thin their congregations, you may possibly be deceived in your hopes. Methinks the run of success, and the crowded auditory you have had, since at the head of a part of a divided church, might make you contented and easy. If I might be of your council, I should advise you, to be thankful to God for your own usefulness, and not to envy others theirs; and withal to be humble and easy, for your mountain is not so strong as to be incapable of being moved. I am persuaded every faithful minister wishes for an encrease of your serviceableness, whether you preach Christ in the latitude or restrictively; in your own church, or at Mr. Coward's lecture. For my self, my hearty prayer is, that you may go on
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and prosper, and that the work of the Lord may be succeeded in your hands.

I think my self incapable of wishing you any thing but good, and the true reason of my giving you this publick address, is, not any prejudice I bear to you, or any of your friends, but because you have publickly charged the greatest number of your brethren with laying Christ aside, and being mere heathens in the manner of their publick ministrations; as being traitors to Jesus Christ, and scandalously deserting his cause from a prevailing love to natural religion. If you meant nothing by these solemn charges but mere declamation, your integrity will be suspected, by fixing the charge on the greatest number. If the charge be true, and you can maintain it, I have given you an opportunity of defending your self by proving it. If I have misrepresented you, I shall upon conviction from you, do you publick justice, by retracting or explaining my remarks on your sermon. But this I insist on, that if your charge is rash and groundless, you ought, as a christian, and much more as a minister of Christ, in justice to your self, and in justice to your brethren, to own your fault as publickly as you have given offence by it, and to withdraw the accusation if you can't support it. I shall only add, that if any personal scurrility, and nameless scandal should happen to come out from the usual quarter, I shall pass it by with the silence and contempt I have hitherto done. But as I have ever had a real value for you, I shall be glad of an opportunity to be able to vindicate your conduct in the sermons I have been considering; it being one of the greatest pleasures of life, to do justice to the injured, or even suspected character of a friend.

To conclude: If it will be a satisfaction to any to inform them, why I have particularly chosen the two Sermons of Mr. *Guyse* for the subject of these reflections, when we may find many grievous complaints of the growth of infidelity and vice in the writings of other serious divines; I assure them, my reason is, not his joining with them in their complaints, but, as I apprehend it, that unchristian spirit with which he makes them. It hath been usual with many good men, and serious ministers, to complain of the corruptions of their own time, as greater than what they were in others; possibly because they were witnesses to the vices of the times in which they lived themselves, and could not have so certain and full a knowledge of the decay of serious religion in the ages before them. If Mr. *Guyse* had only lamented the growing infidelity of his own day, I should have heartily join'd with him in his prayers to God, that a stop might be put to the progress of it. But not contented to do this, he hath thrown out the bitterest charges against the greatest numbers of the ministers of Christ, and ascribed the decays of religion and practical godliness to their abandoning the peculiars of christianity; and being meer heathens upon view and principle in their publick ministrations. This I apprehend to be so cruel a conduct, as deserves some publick animadversion. Whether the complaints of good men before us, were reasonable or not, I shall neither affirm or deny. Which ever it be, it will be no justification of Mr. *Guyse's* conduct. He ought to have known the truth of his charges before he fixed them, and to produce his proofs when

when demanded from him. If others have done wrong in the representations they have made of their own times, Mr. *Guyse* can't have done right, if he hath misrepresented his own. If their accounts were true, it does not follow that his are so too. Or if there be a visible decay in practical godliness now, it doth not follow, that it is owing to the greatest number of preachers being turn'd heathens and infidels; or that he should have loaded his Brethren with so injurious an imputation. He might have kept free from invectives against the greatest number of preachers, and yet have lamented with as good a grace, and as serious a Spirit, infidelity and ~~the~~. I remember to have read a * preface with pleasure, partly on this subject, to a discourse of *preaching Christ*, written with an apparent concern for the honour and success of Christianity, and in such a manner as shews the author to have been possessed of the benign and humble spirit of it; in which he pays the just acknowledgments to the preachers of the present time, and only proposes it as a matter of enquiry, to what cause our want of success in our ministry is to be ascribed. And if I should recommend his way of writing as a pattern to Mr. *Guyse*, I am assured 'tis a pattern worthy his imitation. I pray God grant us all more of that *heavenly wisdom* which is *peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated*, that we may appear to be the genuine disciples of the meek and humble Jesus. And tho' passions and frailties will more or less betray themselves in the best of men, yet I have the pleasure, of which

* *Dr. Watts's Preface to Mr. Jennings's Discourses of preaching Christ, &c.*

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none shall deprive me, to think that I shall one day meet them in an happier state, where these frailties that now distress us shall be no more; where our present differences shall all cease, and where we shall esteem and love each other as brethren; even in that desirable world, where dwell everlasting righteousness and peace.

I am, REVEREND SIR,

Yours, &c.

London, Sept.

1729.

SAM. CHANDLER.

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